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BURIED AT SEA.

BY MARIE J. M'COLL.

Sad and silent we stood around,
And tears dimmed every eye,
While the prayers were read o'er the brave young dead,
So soon 'neath the waves to lie.
And we thought of the friends in the far-off home,
Now waiting so longingly
For the loved one low in a wave-washed tomb,
Down in the deep, deep sea.

Ah, it seemed so hard to lay him there,
'Neath the foam-flecked, restless wave,
Where the winds alone will sob and moan
O'er his lonely, nameless grave,
Far down 'neath the shadow of home-bound ships,
Where the purple sea-plant pityingly
Will bend to kiss the slumberer's lips,
Down in the deep, deep sea.

No polished marble can e'er be raised
Above the dear one's head:
No sculptured stone, but the sea makes moan,
Where the loved and lost is laid:
And in grieving hearts enshrined for aye,
Will his memory cherished be,
Though his resting-place be far away—
Down in the deep, deep sea.

THE WHITE LADY;

OR,

The Brierton Mystery.

A FEARFUL OMEN.

CHAPTER I.

COMING HOME.

With light, free step and quickening pulse, Captain Vane stepped once more on English shore, after an absence of nearly three years. He had been abroad with his regiment, but had obtained leave of absence on the plea of urgent private affairs.

It is not necessary to disguise from our readers that "urgent private affairs" meant in this case that Captain Vane was coming home to be married to a beautiful girl, whom he had loved, with singular devotion and constancy, ever since she was a wee lass of thirteen.

No wonder, then, that the young officer felt as if he were treading on air, rather than on *terra firma*, and felt benevolently disposed toward all mankind. He only waited to get possession of his baggage, and then he went on. Winifred had appointed their meeting for seven o'clock on the evening of the morrow, at a pretty, secluded place, where they had passed many happy hours together in days gone by.

Therefore, on reaching town, he found that his impatience had not helped him much, as he would have to remain here all night, after all.

He put up at the "Grosvenor," and the evening passing slowly, he suddenly bethought himself to call on the family lawyer, where he might possibly hear some news of Winifred.

Mr. Longley was a quiet, grave man, who looked over-weighted with business cares, but his anxious face relaxed a little as he held out his hand to Captain Vane.

"Welcome home," he said, cordially. "I have just been telegraphing to Miss de Lacy the intelligence that your ship had arrived in port."

"And I have been doing the same thing," returned Captain Vane, with a smile. "But it is better she should hear twice than not at all."

"Good news will always bear repeating, Captain Vane. Oh! by the by," he added, quickly, "did you receive my letter before you left?"

"No; what letter?"

"Well, I wrote to acquaint you with the fact that Miss de Lacy had come into a large fortune, from her great-uncle, Sir Hugh de Lacy. It was supposed that he would leave it to his nephew and heir, the present baronet, who has, of course, the entailed estates. But they had some quarrel, and Sir Hugh altered his will just ten days before his death, leaving his whole fortune to Miss de Lacy, her children to inherit after her."

"And suppose there were no children, what then?" inquired Captain Vane, who was not over-pleased to find that Winifred was an heiress.

"There are three people who are to divide the money, in that case."

"Who are they?"

"You would not know their names, I fancy—but stay; you may occasionally have heard of James de Lacy, as Miss Winifred is very intimate with his only daughter?"

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, he is one. Then there is Wild Will, as they call him, another distant connexion of Sir Hugh's; and a gentleman-farmer at Winstable, who has several daughters, who are said to be very handsome and very extravagant."

Captain Vane looked down in moody reflection, whilst Mr. Longley, after watching him with some surprise for a few seconds, said, "you don't seem very well satisfied with my information?"

"You forget that this may have altered Miss de Lacy's feelings and intentions as regards me."

"I don't know anything less probable," replied Mr. Longley, with unmistakable sincerity. "I have been acquainted with Miss de Lacy ever since her childhood, and can certify that she has one of those strong, steadfast natures that never change."

"It is very wicked and ungrateful of me to mistrust her a single second," replied Captain Vane, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, "for I have loved her almost as long as you have known her; and it is only the intensity of my longing that makes me doubt."

"Well," said Mr. Longley, smiling, "you will have to make your peace with her to-morrow. I have no doubt in my own mind but that you will obtain her forgiveness."

Captain Vane had no doubt upon this point either as he rose to take his leave. He reached the door, and then some impulse, which was a mystery to him at the time, although subsequent events made it appear like a prophetic instinct of the troubles to come, induced him to add, "Who did you say would inherit Winifred's fortune in case of her death?"

Mr. Longley took a slip of paper off the desk near at hand, and wrote down the several names in due order.

"Thank you," said Captain Vane, putting the memorandum in his pocket; "good-night again."

"Good-night, and *bon voyage*," replied Mr. Longley, with the air of a man who was puzzled and surprised by what he had seen. "Why on earth did he want those names?" he said to himself, when the door closed on his visitor; "it is very odd."

He reflected gravely for a few minutes, and then he added, half aloud, "It can't signify to him, anyway; and, besides, there was no mistaking the genuine disappointment he showed at hearing that his future wife was an heiress. He can't surely be so mad as to contemplate persuading her to renounce her rights in favor of these three men. No, no," (smiling to himself,) "that would be altogether too foolish, and this is not such a disinterested age! He has some other motive and meaning beyond my ability to solve; but it certainly is strange—very strange indeed."

And with this concluding asseveration, very emphatically spoken, Mr. Longley returned to the bosom of his family; and professional discretion being one of his virtues, was careful to give no hint of what had occurred.

CHAPTER II.

KEEPING THE TRYST.

Captain Vane went to bed that night; but it would be a great mistake to say that he slept. Tossing about on his weary pillow, which felt as if it were stuffed with thorns, instead of down, he thought of Winifred, and her glad eyes of greeting, when she saw his shadow darken the green lane, momentarily, in hurrying to her side.

His heart sank now and then when he remembered this new wealth of hers, and pictured it coming between them to his sorrow. But his faith in her was too tender and complete to make these doubts of long duration.

"I shall find her the same as ever!" was the confident conclusion of all his vague misgivings; "only lovelier, and sweeter, and truer! Poor little love! I wonder if she is keeping awake, too, in order to anticipate the joy of our reunion!"

He had chosen an early hour for his journey; but he was already up and about when the drowsy waiter brought his water, and announced that some coffee would be waiting for him by the time he was ready.

"As soon as you like," said Captain Vane; "for I am ready now."

Of course, when he got to the station, there was an hour to wait. Still he had a feeling of being on his way, and that helped him through the interval.

The birds were twittering dreamily on every bough, and beginning to plume their wings for flight, when, the fog of London left behind, he found himself in the open country at last, and the engine drew a deep breath, as if it enjoyed the clearer atmosphere, and felt a great load lifted off its chest. Captain Vane breathed freer too.

"Ten more hours," he said to himself, "and then—" Ah, then? It was almost as well he never finished his sentence.

It was just striking five when he got out of the train at Ludley. He drew out his watch to compare it with the clock, and, having ascertained that he was within a minute of the correct time, took up the small travelling-bag he had brought with him, and walked slowly on toward the trysting-place.

He had been in a wild hurry before, but now, odd to say, he would almost have put off the hour of their meeting, so much he dreaded that all his joyful anticipations would end in disappointment and pain.

All his old doubts came back, not in single file this time, but in whole battalions.

Supposing Winifred failed him, would his life be worth living then?

He loved her with a deep, passionate love, fierce and strong, constant and tender. She was all the world to him, and without her, his existence would be a terrible blank.

Could he bear it? He believed not. But then he knew nothing, as yet, of the wonderful endurance that comes to strong natures out of the very anguish that is death to weaker men.

As he sat down on the stile, where she had bade him meet her, the short hand of his watch pointed to six, and there was only one hour between him and happiness—or between him and despair!

He kept it in his hand after this, and consulted it constantly, as the minutes went slowly on.

Seven at last!

He was watching the lane, but there was no sign of her there; no sign of her in the meadow, where the cattle grazed contentedly, and the bees were flying back to their hives, laden with sweets.

Five minutes past.

"She is very late!" Captain Vane said, in his impatience; and then he opened her letter, and began to read it again:—

"My Very Dear Paul—

"I have a fancy that we must meet in joy, just where we parted in sorrow, three years ago; and a foolish fancy too, you will say; but when people love so much, they are never very wise, especially women, who cannot reason where they feel strongly. I shall be staying at Brierton for a month before you arrive, and you will have to travel so far, that I shall be at the trysting-place long before you. But as my happiness comes nearer and nearer, my patience improves, so that I shall not mind waiting so very much. And then it will be such joy to look on your face again, and to feel that soon death need only part us! I wonder if this thought is as sweet to you as it is to me? Perhaps not; for I have been so lonely, and men are stronger-hearted than we. The hours creep slowly away, but *the* day will come at last. Until then, believe me, dear Paul, in all truth and trust, Lovingly yours,

"Winnie."

He pressed his lips against the paper that held these precious lines, and, as he did so, some demon whispered to him, "When she wrote that, she was poor; now she is rich!"

But he hated himself the next moment for having admitted this treason into his thoughts again, and would not allow himself to watch for her in the lane full ten minutes as a punishment.

Half-past seven.

He was weary of waiting and watching—so weary, and she would not come.

Could she be ill—dying? Even this would be less bitter than knowing her false.

"But what have I ever done, that such a punishment as this should fall upon me?" he said, with passionate rebellion. "And, besides, she was full of health and strength three months ago—why should she die?"

The reeds that skirted the broad river close by put their heads together, and whispered softly, "Why should she die?"

Captain Vane referred to her letter again. Was it possible that he had mistaken the hour, or even the day?

No; there it was legibly written:

"Meet me at seven on Thursday, the 18th June, at the stile leading into Brierton Wood; where we parted in tears, and shall meet again in joy."

This was inscribed on the back of the letter, distinct from the other part, as if to impress it more plainly on his mind; or, maybe, serve as a guide, in case his memory should play him false.

And now it was twenty minutes to eight.

The hand of his watch had toiled slowly round to this point; and then a sense of gloom and desolation indescribable began to steal over him.

The birds were twittering drowsily; the water made a musical murmur, rushing into the green banks; everything was so bright and fair, it seemed as if no sorrow could invade and darken the scene.

But there she was at last! Captain Vane's heart gave a wild bound. How he would chide her for her tardiness—cruel Winny!

Nay; sweet, kind, true Winny, for she was so near!

But as the figure approached, a convulsive shudder went through Captain Vane. It was not his beloved, but a peasant girl, in a little red hood, who was crossing the meadow on her way to the farm.

He felt worse now than if he had never had this hope.

To be nearly a whole hour behind her time, showed that one of the two terrible alternatives that had presented themselves to his mind must have been realized; and he must resign himself to a Winny dying, or a Winny false.

For if she were all he once believed her, she would have managed to reach the trysting-place, even if she had crawled there on her hands and knees!

Captain Vane felt his heart sink within him; but, because he would not judge hastily her whom he loved better than his life, he waited a few more minutes, with such patience as he could command, and then, there being still no sign of her, he got down from the stile, and resolved to take his way to the village, and make inquiries there.

He loved her so dearly even yet, that he resolved to give her the benefit of the doubt within him, that was true and faithful to his boyhood's love.

Turning, he came face to face with the river, which was strangely clear, even in the wild hurry of its strong tide. The water grass rocked itself gently to and fro, and the willows waved overhead, as if they were beckoning him on, and wanted to speak, but could not.

Captain Vane drew near to the brink, and stood looking reflectively down into the pebbly depths.

As he did so, something white caught his eye, suspended from one of the lower branches of a tree; and he hurried to the spot.

It was a woman's veil; and as he gathered it into his hand, the shadow of some familiar perfume, both loved and remembered, seemed to linger about it, making him sick and cold.

He had said, within himself, that he would rather know her dead than false; and yet, at the bare chance that his prayer had been answered, he trembled like an aspen-leaf in a sharp wind. Now he would rather, ten times over, that she were false, only that she were not dead.

His eyes, dim with dread, looked straight away from the river, hurrying along in the cool shade of the willows; and it seemed to him that any suspense, however painful, were better than the awful certainty that might be awaiting him beneath the quiet surface of the treacherous tide.

For full five minutes he did not look or move; then, summoning all his courage, he hazarded a sharp, shrinking glance along the waving line of the river.

After this, he knew the worst.

Entangled among the reeds was a little black hat, with a long, sweeping feather, he had seen her wear many and many a time in the happy times gone by.

Men do not often notice these things much, but he had noticed this, because it suited Winifred so charmingly.

"Well, then," she had said, when she heard this, "I will keep it for you, dear, and for you only. I shall put it by directly you leave, and when we meet again you shall know how true I am by this—even before you see my face."

He would have known it among a million, for had not it always formed part of the picture he had drawn in his own mind of Winifred. To have forgotten that would almost have been to forget her.

And there it lay, crushed, saturated, and a mere wreck, but breathing still of Winifred, although it might be of Winifred dead.

Captain Vane's heart sank within him; but he might still have doubted his own desolation, only that he found signs of a struggle on the bank, and the impress of a little foot he knew, by instinct, must be Winifred's.

And still searching, through eyes dim with tears, he came upon the last letter he had ever written Winifred—a letter she would only have parted from in parting from life.

It was ground into the damp turf, as if a cruel heel had tried to stamp it out of sight. But this was not the only discovery. Close beside the letter was a fragment of brown cloth, with a peculiar-looking button attached to it.

It looked as if it had been snatched from its wearer in a despairing struggle for life; and all these evidences combined, left no doubt of her fate.

Captain Vane had seen dangerous service, and faced death often for his Queen and country; but he had never known a minute of such intense anguish and fear as assailed him now.

He shuddered, and sobbed convulsively, calling, "Winny! Winny!" in tones of grief and despair beyond description.

This was the end of his bright anticipations—his impatient longings; that she lay there—even within reach, perhaps, but unheeding—with her tranquil face all unconscious of the kiss that was frozen on his lips, and unresponsive to his pain.

In such moments as these, men live for years, and bear the impress of these years as plainly to all future time as if they had actually passed.

Captain Vane appeared to grow old suddenly, and his heart seemed to wither and sink in his breast. Dazed and stupefied with excess of sorrow, he could not even think, much more act.

But after a long interval—he never knew how long—a dull instinct prompted him to claim as his own all that remained to him now of the beautiful maiden he had loved so long, and who had perished so sadly in her sweet prime.

By the help of a long, thick stick with a forked end, he managed to drag the hat slowly to land.

Maybe she had been standing on the bank, thinking of him, and overbalanced herself.

"If I had only come on last night," thought Captain Vane, "I might have saved her."

The worst part of every sorrow is this painful self-reproach—this torturing regret at opportunities now lost and gone.

Captain Vane sat there benumbed, stupefied, unconscious for a time. How could it matter what became of him since his love was dead?

He had been too excited in the morning to eat, and now he was beyond it, even if the food had been held to his parched lips.

Now and then he awoke to a sense of his loss, but generally his mind was a dull blank, through which his grief could scarcely penetrate to make himself understand.

Something had happened—something awful, and sad, and bitter to fear; but, thank heaven, he could not feel it very much—he just knew that he suffered, and that was all.

His darling's face was shadowed by the gold of her hair, and her eyes were sealed down by the dark lids; and he sat on the brink of the river, flowing even to the sea, thinking, when he could think at all, that death might come to him, if he waited long enough.

And with this hope he could afford to be patient.

CHAPTER III.

LOOKING FOR WATER-LILIES.

Pretty Delia Coveney had been to her aunt's house with a message from her mother, and as Mrs. Merridew was as fond of her niece as a selfish woman who has got above herself—if I may be allowed to use the term—can be, she kept her to supper.

In vain Delia pleaded that mother might be anxious. Mrs. Merridew was not to be overruled.

"Rubbish!" she said; "she knows you are coming to me, doesn't she?"

"But I told her I should be home to supper, aunt."

"Then you made a mistake. Your uncle has gone to Drysdale market, and is very late, and it takes all the relish out of food when you eat it alone. So you make yourself content for once, and take my word for it your mother will be glad enough to be rid of you."

"Oh, aunt!" exclaimed Delia, indignantly.

Mrs. Merridew tapped the girl's flushed cheek with her spectacle-case, and said, laughing, "Don't fire up so easy, my dear, because you will only have to cool down again. If you say so much about not staying, I shall fancy you expected to find some young man here, and are not pleased at being put off with an old woman like me for company."

"You know better than that," replied Delia, who was ready to cry. "I don't care a bit about young men."

"Oh, no, of course not," cried Mrs. Merridew; "no girls do!"

"I didn't say that, Aunt Maria."

Delia was so candid and honest that she could not withhold any part of the truth, even when she wanted.

Mrs. Merridew gave a loud, derisive laugh.

"And you mean to say you are different to the rest?"

"I mean to say that I don't care for anybody but mother and my relations."

"Not even for Stephen Young?" said Mrs. Merridew, with a mischievous smile.

"Not even for Stephen Young," answered Delia, coloring violently, but speaking with a certain steadiness and decision all the same.

"He wouldn't be over-pleased if he heard you say so."

"I don't care whether he is pleased or not, Aunt Maria; he is nothing to me!"

"Well, I never! You are pretty independent, I must say! Do you expect your mother to live forever?"

"No," said Delia, sadly.

"And what's to become of you after she's gone? You know she's always been sitting, and her annuity dies with her!"

The girl put her hand in Mrs. Merridew's, and looked up, piteously and imploringly, into the other's eyes.

"Oh! please, please, I can't bear to hear such dreadful things!"

"That shows you want hardening," said Mrs. Merridew, who was often very unkind without meaning to be. "It's always best to look things in the face."

"When you are obliged, aunt; but there's no need before," replied the girl, with a slight shiver. "Mother may live for years and years yet."

"And she may not."

This possibility seemed to overwhelm Delia, who hid her face, and sobbed.

We have said that Mrs. Merridew did not mean to be cruel. Prosperity, and the lack of little ones about her, had made her outwardly hard and uncompromising; but there was a sound core under the rough and somewhat bitter husk.

Moved by the child's tears, she stooped down, and kissed her tenderly.

"There, there!" she said; "don't be foolish. You know I never meant anything particular—only to give you a hint the Stephen Young is not be despised."

"I don't despise him," sobbed Delia; "only I don't love him the same as I love mother, and you and Uncle Merridew."

"You needn't love him the same as you

love us. He'd rather have something different, I dare say."

"But I can't love him at all, aunt."

"Then take my advice, Delia, and try," said Mrs. Merridew, very emphatically. "Most things can be managed, if you set yourself to it, according to my experience. And even suppose you shouldn't get to love him quite as much as you might, marry him all the same, and trust to the love's coming after."

"But that wouldn't be right, aunt."

"You silly child! who gave you such notions as those?"

"No one did; they came of themselves."

"Then get rid of them as fast as you can, for goodness sake! or you'll find them terribly in your way."

"Didn't you marry for love, then, aunt?" inquired Delia.

"Perhaps I did, and perhaps I didn't; but it was the fashion then, at any rate."

"And isn't it now?"

"No," answered Mrs. Merridew, shortly.

"I don't care about following the fashion, aunt."

"Bless us!" exclaimed Mrs. Merridew; "what has come to the child? I must get your uncle to give you a talking to"

"I shouldn't mind if he did," replied Delia, with her sweet, coaxing smile. "I don't believe that he's forgot what he felt when he was young, even if you have."

Mrs. Merridew was silent a minute, pondering; then a smile broke over her comely face.

"I'll say one thing for you, Delia—you make dreadful fools of us all."

"Oh, no, aunt!" exclaimed her niece, demurely.

"Oh, yes! You've such a way with you—that's the fact. But, all the same, you had better make up your mind to marry Stephen Young."

"Not if I don't love him, aunt!" replied Delia, pleadingly.

"And why shouldn't you love him, child? He's as handsome a young fellow as one can wish to see; and there's many and many a girl in Brierton would give her head for your chance!"

"I am sure she's welcome to it, without such a high payment," answered Delia, rather disdainfully.

"Well, but what is the matter with Stephen Young?"

"I don't know that there is anything the matter with him, aunt, only that he has such fierce eyes and determined ways he always frightens me. When I marry, I must have some one a little more gentle than that."

"I tell you what," said Mrs. Merridew, in a very decided tone; "I've heard girls talk about what they would and what they wouldn't have before this, and then they had to take what they could get, like the rest of us. Most women start with very high notions; but they come down gradually, as you will have to do, my dear."

"But I haven't high notions, aunt. I don't want a rich husband, or anything of that sort. I only want a man I can love with all my heart."

"And if he isn't to be found?"

"Then I can go without."

"Don't talk nonsense, child. Your mother can't live forever; and when she dies what is to become of you?"

"I'll come and live with you, Aunt Maria. You say yourself you want some one to take up the stitches in your knitting of long winter evenings, and uncle likes me to read the newspaper to him and fill his pipe."

"That's all very well," answered Mrs. Merridew, her face softening, "and Heaven knows you'd be welcome; but it is a woman's destiny to marry, and there isn't many of us that make good old maids. I should rather see you a happy wife and mother than shut up with two old fogies, like my John and me, all the prime of your days. What is the use of being born so pretty, if no one is to be the better for your prettiness?"

"Am I pretty?"

"You know you are, just as well as I can tell you," answered Mrs. Merridew. "I guess that a girl learns that lesson before she masters her A B C. You don't notice that men run after you, I suppose?"

"They are very kind," said Delia, shyly.

"They ar'n't particularly kind to me, except when they have something to sell they fancy they can palaver me into taking," was the dry response; "so I expect there's a difference somewhere. But take off your hood, my dear, and make yourself contented. I don't mean you to go until you have had your supper; and you know it's my habit to have my way."

Delia wished the habit weren't so strong upon her; but as there was nothing to be gained by resistance, she untied her strings and sat quietly down to table.

Mrs. Merridew had begun her married life in a very humble way; but she kept two servants now, and was considered rather a grand person at Brierton.

It was hinted that her savings were something considerable, and although her husband ridiculed the suggestion, he looked as if he thought it were true.

Delia hardly tasted what she eat, she was so busy wondering whether her mother would be anxious at her non-appearance.

At a little past eight o'clock Mrs. Merridew graciously informed her that she might go home if she liked, and Delia rose with alacrity, and put on her things. But she was not to go empty-handed. To do Mrs. Merridew justice, she never forgot that her sister was poor.

A pat of butter, a nice little joint of pork, a cake and some rolls, were put into a basket; and Delia started fairly loaded, considering that the last faint rays of sunset were crimsoning the ripening corn.

But she started briskly enough, nevertheless, in her joy at finding herself free.

Tripping along the lane, pondering deeply over her aunt's words, which had awoke a slumbering pain and dread in her young heart, she reached the stile that led across the meadows, and was just mounting it, when she found herself face to face with the last person she desired to see—and that was Stephen Young.

In her surprise, she gave a startled cry, and dropped the basket, the contents of which rolled out upon the grass.

He stooped gayly down to recover them, and soon replaced them in the basket again, which he retained in his own possession, thus giving a plain hint of his intention to accompany her home.

"If you please, I can carry it," said Delia, putting out her hand.

But this was no advantage to her, for, instead of regaining what she had lost, the little hand went to swell the list of Stephen Young's conquests, and was quietly resting on his arm before she knew what she was about.

Delia could have cried with anger and mortification, but as tears would not have helped her, she resolutely kept them back.

"At last I have caught you," he murmured. "Do you know, you little witch, that you have led me a pretty dance?"

"It was not my fault," answered Delia, with a certain spirit, born of her desperation. "I had no thought of anything of the kind"

"I wish you had."

"Why?"

And Delia opened her brown eyes, and stared at him curiously.

"Because women have such provoking ways, that sometimes what looks like hate is meant for love; therefore, it is better even they should rail at you than take no notice of you at all."

"That isn't my way, at any rate, Mr. Young. I'm as honest in my likes as I am in my dislikes."

"You think you are."

"I know I am."

"You must be a wonderful woman if you do know your own mind; there are not many who do. 'No' one day means 'Yes' the next."

"Not with me."

"Why shou'd you be so different to all the rest?" he said. "Besides, I am one of those who believe that everything may be had by waiting."

His eyes, full of reckless, boundless love and steady determination, fastened themselves upon Delia's face, and made her tremble.

She had a strong opinion of her own on the subject now, but every one was against her—even Mrs. Coveney, who would fain have seen her daughter comfortably settled.

As the son of a wealthy farmer, Stephen Young was considered an excellent match—better than Delia could have aspired to, perhaps, in an ordinary way.

But then she was so very pretty, that conquest came natural to her, as every one agreed.

Shrinking away from his bold glance, she said softly, "It is very unkind of you to follow me about in this way, Mr. Young. There are plenty of girls who would be glad enough to listen to you, if I am not."

"That may be; but I don't want them. You see, men can't love to order."

Delia saw her advantage, and being a clever little woman, seized it on the instant.

"Then why should you imagine that women are more accommodating?"

"That's quite different. Women have no right to have a will of their own; they have only to do as they are told."

"As who tells them, pray?" flashed Delia.

"As their mothers—or the man who loves them."

"And if several tell you to marry them, what is to be done? It is impossible to marry them all."

Stephen had never thought of this, and was sorely puzzled for a reply.

"There's a way of choosing—"

"Yes," she interrupted, promptly; "you choose the one you love, but if your heart does not speak for you, then you refuse them all. I was only eighteen last birthday," she went on, with a certain pride and defiance; "and there is plenty of time yet to think of such things. I am determined I will never marry at all unless I can have a husband I love with my whole heart."

He got his arm about her, like a circle of iron, and looked passionately down into her flushed face.

"Why shouldn't you love me, Delia? I am neither old nor ugly."

"We cannot tell how love comes or goes," she answered, trying to break from him.

"Don't struggle so," he said, with unmerciful power. "You cannot break from me all the while I choose to keep you."

"I had no idea you were a coward," she answered, resentfully.

"If you were a man, you should not have said that to me, pretty Delia."

"If I had been a man, you would not have held me against my will," she answered, dauntlessly.

Stephen loosened his hold, and laughed.

"What a spirit you have, child! One would hardly believe it, to look at you. However, I think I know how to tame it. You'll scoff at what I am going to say, but it will come true, nevertheless. Before one year is gone by, Delia, you will be my wife."

"Never!" she cried.

"We shall see. I never yet failed in any object I set my mind to, and I don't mean to fail in this."

Soft and pliant as she looked, she had an inner strength, a power of resistance, for which he had not given her credit. This was revealed to him suddenly in the uplifted eyes, so calm, and cool and defiant; in the determined fold of the sweet, red lips.

Stephen Young drew back, watched her narrowly for a moment, then smiled.

"The harder the conquest, the greater the triumph," he said within himself. "I have patience, luckily, and I can wait."

Ah, wait forever, if his thought was to win that gentle heart into his passionate keeping.

"My mother will be anxious about me!" she said, presently. "I have stayed away so long already—pray let me pass!"

He moved aside reluctantly, impelled by some instinct he could not define, and she sped away like a young fawn which has been roughly scared. She did not once look back until she came to the wood, when, hazarding a sharp glance toward the spot where she had left him, she found he was gone.

Then she stopped to regain breath.

Her pulses were throbbing wildly, and she could hear the loud-throbbing pulsations of her heart. Placing her hand there to still its tremble, she sat down on the stile, and rested.

In all her innocent life, Delia had never hated any living thing until now. But she hated Stephen Young.

He had outraged her pride by his forced caress—he had wounded and frightened her. As to be his wife, she would die first!

But after awhile, as her anger cooled, she remembered the basket her aunt had given her to carry home, and was just leaving the stile to return in search of it, when she stopped short with a stifled cry of fear and dread.

But Delia was a daughter of the people, and death was neither new nor strange to her. The first shock over, she advanced quickly, and stood looking down with infinite pity and tenderness on the insensible figure lying across her path.

The stillness around her was unbroken save by the deep woodland murmurs, the soft, droning hum of insects, that came on the breath of the summer wind.

"So young!" she thought, the tears raining from her gentle eyes—"so young, and to perish thus!"

For Delia had no thought at first but that Captain Vane was dead. But when she looked closer, his face was dark and contorted, as if he still suffered and still lived. But she paused no longer. Hurrying at wild speed across the meadow, she reached her aunt's house, and panting, almost incoherent, implored aid.

The good farmer had just come home from market, tired, a little cross, and needing food; but the urgency of her appeal roused him, and calling two of his laborers from their work, he followed her to the place she indicated.

His first words explained the whole mystery to her wandering mind—all the mystery she saw, or realized, as yet in her excitement and consternation.

If the man's face was dark and troubled, it was because he had to endure still, and live on.

(To be continued in our next.)

THE

Bandits of the Prairie.

A TALE OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER.

BY T. J. CHAMBERS.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE CAVE.

Inez stared silently at the young man for a moment after he had made this startling declaration.

"Are you in earnest?" she asked at length, "or do you only mean to taunt us?"

"As Heaven hears me, I am in earnest," replied Carlos. "I cannot endure to see one so young and beautiful as this maiden in the power of such a villain as Juan. I have resolved to carry her back to her home—and if her father will forgive me for what I have already done, I will henceforth lead a different life. I am not fit for my present calling."

"Oh, Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Inez and Louisa in a breath.

"Then, Inez, you will not try to prevent what I am about to do?"

"The saints forbid!" cried the woman. "I will aid you in every way I can. But can we leave the cave unseen? Where is Juan?"

"Gone to the rancho on some business. He left me to guard the entrance to the cave—little thinking, perhaps, that I would turn traitor. There is no one in the cave but ourselves; if we can get away before Juan returns, all will be well. We must fly at once, however, for the captain may come back at any moment."

"Oh, let us haste—let us haste—let us fly from this horrible place!" cried Louisa, excitedly, and grasping her companion's hand in hers.

"Follow me, ladies," said Carlos, "I will conduct you safely from the cave, and out of the reach of Juan's power, or die in the attempt. Inez, fasten the door as usual—when Juan returns he will think you are still inside."

"Heaven grant us success!" murmured Inez, as they left the room which had long been her home.

"Amen!" said Louisa. "Oh, Carlos, if you deliver us from this awful place, you shall always be my friend; and my father will reward you liberally."

"I want no reward, señorita. If you will think kindly of me—if you will try to believe that I am not altogether bad, I shall be happy," replied Carlos, in a voice husky with emotion.

"You have a noble heart, and you will yet become a good and honored man. Promise me, Carlos, that you will forsake forever your desperate companions—that you will henceforth lead a guiltless life."

"I will try, señorita, but I fear I shall not succeed. I am deeply stained with guilt; my life has been passed amid scenes of lawlessness and bloodshed."

"But you are young," replied Louisa, encouragingly. "You have many years before you in which to atone for the crimes of the past. And it is never too late to mend, you know."

"You are very kind," said Carlos, passing one hand over his eyes. "But come—let us hurry; do not speak any more, for perhaps the very walls have ears."

Carlos stole swiftly but cautiously along the passage toward the mouth of the cave, followed closely by the two women, who still held each other's hands, although they spoke no further words. The mouth of the cavern was soon reached, the foliage parted, and the two stood outside in the free air and the blessed sunlight.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Louisa, raising her beautiful face to the golden sunshine.

"Ah, holy virgin!" murmured Inez, while the tears coursed down her pallid cheeks. "Can it be possible that I shall return to light and liberty—to the arms of my long lost sister!"

"We must not delay," said Carlos, quickly. "Every moment of time is precious. Even now, Juan is probably returning to the cave. Follow me and be silent."

"Farewell, ye haunts of wickedness—farewell, long years of darkness and misery; I am going back to a life of innocence and happiness!" said Inez, brokenly. "Good friend, lead on—we will follow."

Carlos started up-stream, over the hard, smooth rock which lay between the bluff and the edge of the water. He intended to follow along the shore until he could find a convenient place to cross the shallow stream, out of sight of the cave. He knew that if he could get across the stream ere Juan returned, he could lead the two women to the rancho in safety ere their absence was discovered. Scarcely had he proceeded a dozen steps, however, when he heard a smothered curse; the branches which concealed the entrance to the cave in which the horses were stabled, parted, and Juan himself stood before the astonished Carlos, his face fairly purple with passion.

"By ——! What is the meaning of this?" exclaimed the bandit captain, hoarsely.

Carlos recoiled for a moment, but he was resolved not to surrender the girl into the bandit's hands. Drawing a revolver from his bosom, he said, coolly and firmly—

"It means that I have determined to restore this poor girl to her friends; and if you interfere with me it will be at your peril. Stand aside, or I will shoot you down like a dog!"

"You treacherous scoundrel!" cried Juan, fiercely. "This is the way you guard my interests, is it? I have trusted you fully—but, by Heaven! you shall never betray me again!"

While he was speaking, Juan drew a pistol from his belt, and fired. Carlos uttered a low moan, and fell, bleeding and senseless, upon the hard rock.

"Lie there, you traitorous dog," growled Juan. "Thus will I serve all who oppose my will. Now, my pretty dove, I shall have to carry you back to your room. This is the second time you have nearly escaped me; if ever you get another chance, I hope I may be hung for my carelessness."

The bandit produced a strong cord, and advanced toward poor Louisa, who stood pale and speechless, regarding the terrible scene before her. He attempted to bind the girl's arms, but Inez sprang between him and his helpless victim.

"Back! back!" she cried, "back, or I will kill you!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Juan, throwing his arms around the girl's trembling form. "You too have turned traitor, have you? But no matter—you are a woman, and can do nothing."

"Can I not?" said Inez; and with a quick motion of her hand, she plunged her dagger into Juan's side, inflicting a deep but not dangerous wound.

"Ha! would you?" cried Juan. Raising his right hand, he struck the woman a blow in the face that felled her senseless to the ground. Louisa uttered a wild shriek, and she too became mercifully unconscious.

"We shall see who conquers!" muttered the bandit, gazing for a moment at his senseless victims. "It seems I am surrounded by traitors, but I shall outwit them all. Carlos, curse him! is dead—he will never play me false again—and this woman shall be placed in close confinement. When Gonzales returns I will tell him how his wife has been acting, and if he does not teach her better manners, I will kill her. This girl shall be mine—I have already risked much for her, and I will die rather than give her up. I would summon that priest and have the marriage performed at once, but this cursed wound in my side will lay me up for a day or two. The loss of blood weakens me a great deal, but I must manage to get these women back to their room before they come to. I wish I had some help; but I guess I am still strong enough to carry them."

Thus communing with himself, Juan stooped down, and grasping one of the women under each arm, he carried, or rather dragged them back into the cave. His burden was very heavy, but with the strength of desperation the bandit bore the senseless forms of his victims along the dark passage until he reached the room from which they had escaped. Hastily bursting open the door, Juan dragged his prisoners into the grotto, and placed them, not very gently, on one of the couches. A candle was still burning in the room, and by its light the bandit proceeded to bind the two females so that they could scarcely move. This done, he turned his attention to his own wound, and secured a bandage over it to stop the flow of blood.

The unfortunate captives soon recovered consciousness, only to find themselves once more in the gloomy grotto, bound beyond the possibility of escape. Inez uttered a deep sigh, and Louisa burst into a flood of bitter tears. They had thought liberty and happiness so near, and now their last hope was gone.

"I was too smart for you again, you see," said Juan, with a fiendish smile. "The person who outwits me, or escapes my vengeance, will have to stir early, I can tell you."

"Oh, devil in human shape, kill us at once, and end this torture!" cried Inez, passionately.

"I will kill *you* before you are ready to die," replied Juan, fiercely, "but this girl—this beautiful dark-eyed angel—shall live to be my wife."

"She shall never be yours!" exclaimed Inez.

"Indeed! how will you prevent it? You are bound securely, and the little dagger which you used so skilfully upon me is now in my possession."

"I wish it had reached your heart!" said Inez bitterly.

"I dare say, but you did not strike in the right place. I have lost a little blood, but that is no great matter, and a day or two of rest will make me as well as ever."

"Begone from the room—leave us to ourselves," exclaimed Inez, angrily.

"I am going, my dear lady, to bury the body of Carlos," replied Juan, smiling. "The poor boy has paid dearly for his rashness and disobedience—let his fate be a warning to you, Mrs. Gonzales."

With a low bow, Juan left the room, taking care to secure the door on the outside. He hurried along the passage to the open air, anxious to conceal the body of Carlos before any one should see it. He reached the spot where the youth had fallen, but no body was there—Carlos was gone!

"Ten thousand devils!" exclaimed the bandit, furiously. "What does this mean?"

He examined the smooth rock carefully to find some clue to the disappearance of the body, but no trace was to be seen. Yes—there on the hard rock, at the very edge of the water, was the print of a bloody hand; the missing man must have recovered his senses, crawled down to the edge of the stream, and escaped. The still water at the edge was also slightly reddened with blood.

"He has escaped!" said Juan, with a vague feeling of terror at his heart. "Curse him! I thought the ball entered his treacherous brain—but he is gone—he will betray me!"

The frightened villain looked up and down the stream, and across at the opposite bank, but nothing could be seen. He looked up at the rocky bluffs behind him, but he knew that no one, wounded as Carlos was, could scale the almost perpendicular cliffs.

"The scoundrel has crossed the stream," he muttered, "and if he has strength enough to get there, he will doubtless make his way to the rancho and betray me. But let him go—there are only two women and a lot of servants there, and they will not be likely to undertake an expedition against me. I stole all the horses that were worth anything, and brought them safely here; I must get out of this, though before many days pass by—now that our retreat is once betrayed, it will not be safe for us to remain near here. When Gonzales returns we will gather up our traps, drive away all the cattle and horses; then, ho! for Mexico, with my riches and my beautiful wife. Gonzales will certainly be here to-night; he has stayed entirely too long already, but I suppose he has been detained by important business. The sooner we get out of this hole the better it will be for us, I'm thinking, for that Carlos will move the world to be revenged on us. Curse this wound—it makes me weak as a baby."

Juan staggered back into the cave, and reached the door of the room in which the two women were confined, where his strength deserted him, and he fell to the ground in a swoon.

CHAPTER XVI.

PREPARING FOR FLIGHT.

How long Juan lay unconscious, he knew not; but when he recovered from his swoon, he was so weak and drowsy that he made no attempt to arise, but lay there on the damp floor until he sank into a deep and dreamless slumber. When he awoke, he heard voices, and the sound of footsteps somewhere in the cave. His first thought was that his retreat was discovered by his enemies; but he soon decided that the voices belonged to some of his own men. He arose to a sitting posture, and tried to pierce the intense darkness with his aching eyes.

"Who comes there?" he challenged at length.

"Ha! that is Juan's voice!" said one of the men. "Where can he be?"

"Who comes there?" again called Juan, rising to his feet.

"I, Gonzales, with my three men. Where are you, captain?"

"Here, this way—strike a light, can't you?" said Juan, impatiently.

The scratching of matches against the wall was heard, and a blue, curling flame lighted the dreary cave. Gonzales and his men made their way forward to Juan's side.

"What ails you, captain?" asked Gonzales. "You are pale as a ghost."

"I fancy you would be pale also, if you had lost as much blood as I have," answered Juan, testily.

"Why, what have you been doing—fighting?"

Juan related in a few words the incidents of the last day.

"The furies!" exclaimed Gonzales. "Do you think Carlos will betray us?"

"I haven't a doubt of it. He never forgives an injury."

"Then we ought to be getting out of here as soon as possible."

"That is just my opinion, and I have only been awaiting your return to make preparations for flight. What, in the name of the foul fiend, have you been doing all this time?"

"I will explain matters to you, and I have important news to tell you, but this is not a very comfortable place for a lengthy consultation."

"We will go to the men's room, then, and talk over matters fully," said Juan, starting forward. "I'm weak as a child, however, and I don't believe I can get there."

"Let me help you," said Gonzales. "Lean on my arm—so. I suppose there's no danger of your two prisoners getting out?"

"I rather think not, the way they are bound; but to make the matter sure, your men can remain at the door while we discuss our affairs in private. No danger of them playing the traitor like Carlos, I think?"

"I will answer for them," replied Gonzales; and the two worthy leaders of the bandits started along the difficult passage to the other apartment of the cave. Gonzales lighted a piece of candle which he had about him, and by the aid of its dim light, they managed, after much stumbling and a liberal amount of bad language, to reach their destination, when Juan threw himself wearily upon one of the couches, and his lieutenant took a seat by his side.

"Now, Gonzales, what is your important news?" asked Juan.

"Well, I suppose you think that those young Hotspurs, Stanhope and Darrell, have met the fate their rashness deserved, at the hands of the Camanches?" said Gonzales.

"I certainly think they are in the other world by this time—but what of that? I care nothing about them, so that they are out of my way."

"Ah, but they are likely to be in the way again. They have been rescued from the Camanche village by Carrol's Rangers, and now the whole band of rangers, with the young men and old Jack Lewis, are heading this way. They have discovered that Stanhope's girl is not among the Indians, and I think they begin to suspect the truth. If the rangers find us out before we get away, it will be all up with us, you know."

"Are you sure of all this?" asked Juan, greatly excited.

"Only too sure," replied Gonzales. "We saw the whole pack of them about ten o'clock in the evening. They had halted in a piece of woods for some purpose, and had a fire built when we saw them, but they were just ready to start on again. I got off my horse and crawled within hearing distance, and I heard them palavering about the girl that you've got here. Captain Carrol swore that you had stolen the girl, and the others seemed to be of the same opinion. We may expect to see them prowling around here by to-morrow, and we can't get out any too soon. If the rangers catch us, we shall be forced to stretch hemp in a hurry."

"Yes—and that traitor, Carlos, will lead them right here, if he doesn't die on the road. Curse him! if ever I get another chance, I will put a bullet through his treacherous brain without mistake. How late is it now, Gonzales—near midnight, I suppose?"

Gonzales consulted an elegant gold watch, which he had doubtless stolen from some one.

"Nearly four in the morning, captain," he replied.

"Dios! and I have slept since noon yesterday!" exclaimed Juan.

"You were completely exhausted by loss of blood, and will be in poor condition for travelling, and perhaps fighting," said Gonzales.

"Never fear for me—my sleep has refreshed me, and I am now ready for anything that may happen. We have no time to lose, Gonzales, if we make a retreat in a masterly manner. We must take everything with us that we possibly can, and begin life in Mexico in a manner becoming to gentlemen of our accomplishments. Once in Mexico with this girl as my wife and I feel that I shall be a happy man."

"I know a retreat there that will suit us exactly—not so far over the border that we cannot cross back and forth occasionally, when circumstances demand it."

"Aye, aye, Gonzales, that is the kind of place we want. I wish we were safely across—it will be a long and dangerous journey."

"Shall we drive old Stanhope's cattle with us?"

"Most certainly—they will bring us a pretty pile of money. They would bring us more if we could drive them north, and sell to the eastern buyers—but that would be a risky undertaking now, and we have no time to do it. We must get started by daylight, if possible. I suppose all the men will go with us?"

"Yes—they will follow wherever we lead. Ha, ha! We have played a pretty game on old Stanhope for the last year, but the fool never suspected that anything was wrong. I saw him and three or four others last evening away toward the Indian village. I suppose he is on the hunt of his girl!"

"Yes—they were starting yesterday morning while I was going to the rancho. The old man wanted me to go with him, and I promised to overtake him as soon as I went to the stables and got a pair of horses to replace two that had been killed. Ha, ha! I stole every horse in the stables, except one that was too young and skittish to travel. I have them safe in the cave, and shall take them with me to Mexico."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Gonzales, in intense enjoyment. "We are in luck so far. I followed those two Camanche-hunting youngsters, and when they tied their horses in a grove, and rushed into the Indian encampment, I quietly took possession of the animals. The black is a regular beauty, and the other was the best horse in Stanhope's stables."

"If we can only get away safely, our fortunes will be made," said Juan. "We have a pretty sum stored away here in the cave. The first thing to do will be to secure that about our persons. Only you and I know where it is, Gonzales. We will divide it among ourselves, and say nothing about it to the herdsmen."

"It would be folly to divide it up among so many. We will keep the hard cash ourselves, and give the men a share of the cattle and horses."

"Bring the light, and we will secure it at once," said Juan, rising to his feet.

Gonzales took the candle in his hand and led the way across the room. Searching along the wall, he soon came to the place he sought. Pressing his hands firmly against the smooth rock, a portion of it, about a foot square, gave way, and falling inward, revealed a considerable cavity in the wall, which had apparently been filled up by the hand of man for its present use. Several small shelves were cut in the rock, on which lay a large amount of gold and silver coin, and some jewelry. Gonzales held the candle close to the glittering treasure, and was about to transfer some of it to his pockets, when his companion caught his arm and drew him back.

"I am the captain of this band," said Juan. "It is just that I should have the first as well as the largest share of this treasure."

"By no means," returned Gonzales. "I am much older than you, and although you are the captain, you have always been guided by my experience. We divide equally, or not at all."

"So be it, then," said Juan, angrily, "but let us be quick."

The bandits soon secured the money about their clothes, and then returned the loose stone to its place in the wall.

"What shall we do next?" asked Gonzales, when this operation was completed.

"The cattle must all be gathered into one herd, and the men got ready for the journey. You must go at once and attend to this—yet stay. I ought to start at once with the girl, and if you take your wife with you, you will have to take her as a prisoner."

"She must go with me, of course, and I think if I talk to her a bit I can bring her to her senses."

"Very well. We will send your three men to arouse the other herdsmen and collect the cattle, while we will go to the ladies' room, and prepare them for the journey."

The bandits made their way back to the door of the other room, where Gonzales' men were still standing guard. The latter were instructed to take all the horses, except two of the most powerful ones, and go at once to where their companions were engaged in watching the herds, and gather all the cattle into one body ready for the flight. The three men departed at once, and Juan and Gonzales entered the room where the unfortunate females were confined.

The prisoners had slept but little through the night. They arose to a sitting posture at the entrance of the outlaws, and gazed at them in silent terror.

"My dear, the captain says you have been a little disobedient lately," said Gonzales, smiling.

Inez cast upon her husband a glance of anger and scorn, but deigned no reply.

"We have come to inform you that we are about to start for Mexico," continued Gonzales, "and of course we want our wives to go with us."

"Oh, Heaven!" moaned Inez, bowing her head upon her lap, while Louisa burst into a flood of bitter tears. Gonzales seemed to enjoy the scene, but Juan uttered a terrible oath.

"We have no time to listen to women's whimperings," he said. "Gonzales gather up what traps you want, and let us get out of this at once."

Gonzales secured some of the most valuable articles of clothing, rolled them in a bundle, and fastened them to his belt. He then produced a large handkerchief, and advanced to his wife's side.

"We will have to gag these amiable creatures," he said, "or they will cry loud enough to be heard all over Texas."

"You are right," replied Juan. "The girl, at least, has excellent lungs."

The captives allowed the handkerchiefs to be bound over their mouths, making no resistance, for resistance would have been useless.

"Now we are ready!" said Gonzales; and lifting his wife in his arms, he made his way out of the cave, followed by Juan and his weeping prisoner.

Two horses—Walter Darrell's black steed Ebony, and another equally powerful—were brought from the subterranean stable, and the bandit chieftains vaulted into their saddles and lifted their captives in their arms. The gray light of dawn was visible in the east, and the darkness of night was fading away.

"Farewell, familiar haunts," said Juan, looking around at the cliffs and the stream as if he were loth to leave these silent witnesses of his crimes. "Now, ho! for Mexico!"

"Ho! for Mexico!" echoed Gonzales, in exultant tones.

Grasping the reins in their hands, the two bandits urged their horses into the stream, and headed for the opposite shore. The stream crossed, they sunk their spurs into their horses flanks, and went flying over the prairie with the speed of the wind.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE RIGHT TRAIL.

Great was the excitement amid the rangers when they witnessed the apparently miraculous escape of their prisoner, the medicine-man of the Camanches. Some almost doubted the evidence of their senses; others believed that Captain Carrol spoke the literal truth—that the being who had just escaped from their power was indeed the Evil One. Among the latter was Jack Lewis. The wild hunters and scouts of the frontier, brave as lions amid earthly foes, are generally grossly superstitious. They will meet death in its most terrible forms without flinching, and at the same time they will tremble and grow pale at the thought of seeing a visitor from another world.

"You are right, captain," said Lewis, "that was the old devil himself. No human bein' could have got his hands free in the way he did. I think I seen blue flames flashin' around his head just before he started."

"I took it to be a knife," said one of the rangers, more practical than his companions.

"But how did he get his hands loose to use the knife?" replied Lewis. "No, sir; that—*bein'*—was old Satan himself, or one of his imps."

And the old hunter's teeth fairly chattered in his head, so terrifying was the thought.

"That's so, Lewis," added one of the rangers. "I thought all along there was somethin' uncommon about the feller—why, his eyes shone like coals of fire."

"And no wonder, when he was fresh from the infernal regions," said George Stanhope, who, with Miss Lewis and Walter Darrell, had approached at the escape of the prisoner.

"You may laugh, Mr. Stanhope, but it isn't a laughing matter," said Captain Carrol, gravely.

"I am convinced that this villain's escape is a very serious matter for us," replied Stanhope, "but I cannot believe that he was anything more than mortal, and I

am astonished that any of you should entertain such an idea."

"But how could any mortal man get free from them ropes the way he did? Why, the rope was around his neck, and his hands were bound tight together; and yet, quick as a flash of lightning, his hands were free, the rope fell from his neck, and he was gone like a shadow. I tell you, boys," continued the leader of the rangers, earnestly, "I have lived on the border a good many years, seen some hard characters, and helped to hang more'n a few of them, but I never saw such a performance as that before."

"But you have known this man—this medicine-man of the Camanches—for years, have you not?" asked Walter Darrell, who could not forbear smiling at the absurd superstitions of these men.

"Yes, sir, I have known him for years as the medicine-man of the Camanches, and I supposed him to be the biggest villain among mortal men—but now I know he is worse than that—he is the devil!"

"His Satanic Majesty is supposed to roam at large over the world—he would scarcely confine himself for years among one tribe of Indians," said Darrell, laughing.

This view of the subject seemed to confound the rangers for a moment, but Jack Lewis replied:

"I don't s'pose this critter is the devil himself, only one of his imps."

"And you say the cords were burned from his wrists and neck by sulphurous-looking flames?"

"Yes, sir—lengthwise, I seen blue blazes flashin' around his head," said Lewis, solemnly.

"I propose that we examine the ropes with which he was bound," continued Darrell. "If they have been burned, I will admit that the prisoner was the devil; but if they have been cut by a knife, I think you will all conclude that you have been outwitted by a mortal like yourselves."

"A good plan," said several of the rangers in a breath.

Accordingly the ropes were examined, but no traces of fire could be found; they had certainly been severed by a sharp knife. The cords which had bound the prisoner's wrists lay on the ground beneath the dangling rope which was to have hoisted him into the air; and he had carried the noose away around his neck, for it was nowhere to be found.

"You see," said Darrell, "it is very plain that a knife has been used here."

"But where did he get the knife? And how could he use it, with his hands bound?" asked Lewis.

"He must have had the knife concealed somewhere about his dress. How he got his hands free is a mystery to me; but I thought the man had an idea of escape when he requested to have his ankles unbound."

"By —! if I've been swindled this way by a living man, I'll never forgive myself," said Captain Carrol. "If that rascal is a mortal, as I begin to think he is, he will post back to the Camanche village like a streak of lightning, and we'll have the whole tribe howling after us before many hours. What do you say, Jack Lewis?"

"Why, I say the sooner we get out of this the better. Be he human or devil, that critter will have the red-skins after us before morning. I'll bet a herd of cattle," replied the old hunter.

"Get your horses, boys, and let us make tracks at once," commanded Carrol.

"Where do you intend to go?" asked George Stanhope.

"Why, we calculate to go as far as Lewis's house, and see him and his girl safe home."

"If you will join us in the search for my sister, I will pay you anything you ask, and still owe you an everlasting debt of gratitude," said the young man, eagerly.

"Stranger," replied the ranger, "we will do all we can to help you, without asking any pay. We don't work for money often, but just for the fun of the thing. We are all lawyers and justices of the peace—we will do anything to rescue the innocent, and bring the guilty to punishment. If we knew where to look for the girl, now, there would be some chance, but it's pretty certain that she isn't among the Indians."

"I have a suspicion which grows stronger every moment," said Darrell.

"Ha! what is it, Walter—what is it?" asked Stanhope, quickly.

"It is that Louise was stolen by your father's herdsman, Juan. You know how strangely he acted sometimes—I think he entertained a desperate passion for your sister."

"By Heaven, I believe you are right!" exclaimed Stanhope, excitedly.

"What sort of man was this Juan?" asked Captain Carrol.

George Stanhope gave a full description of the Mexican's personal appearance, explaining also why he and his friend sometimes doubted the herdsman's honesty.

"And the fellow reports that the Indians have stolen many cattle from him lately?" asked the ranger.

"Yes—he said he was attacked by Camanches two or three times within the last fortnight."

"Now I know positively that the Camanches have not stolen any cattle within that time. They have only been on one raid, that I know of, and then they carried away Lewis's girl here. Once I saw a lot of white men driving a herd of cattle northward, but I supposed some of the ranchemen were sending them to market, and I paid no great attention to them."

"By Jove! Then our cattle have been stolen by Juan himself, instead of by the Indians."

"I fancy you have been duped by this cunning Mexican," replied Captain Carrol, "and I would not be surprised if he knew something about the whereabouts of your sister."

"If he is the author of all this misery, we will hang him high as Haman," said Stanhope, angrily.

"We must catch him first," said the ranger, dryly.

"We shall catch him—that is, if you and your men will aid in the work."

"Of course we will do so—we would like to see the scoundrel dangling in the air."

"Then you will all go with me to my father's rancho—you too, Lewis, your daughter will be much safer there than in your lonely dwelling," continued the young man eagerly.

"Well, I believe I will go with you, just to help find that girl," replied Jack Lewis. "I know by my own experience, how her parents must feel while she is gone."

"Let us start at once, then," said Captain Carrol. "I suppose if we ride our best, we can make it to your house by daylight, Stanhope?"

"Scarcely," replied Stanhope, "although I hardly know where we are at present."

"Well, we will do the best we can, so leap to your saddles, boys."

In a moment they were galloping across the plain in an easterly direction. The prairie was level and open, and there was nothing to impede their horses. Mile after mile was left behind. At length Captain Carrol, who rode in advance, checked his speed, and listened for a moment.

"I heard horses ahead," he said to one of his companions, "and—look yonder—I see three or four dark forms. Who can they be? Not Camanches, for we left them back at their village. I am going to hail them, at any rate—perhaps they are friends."

Placing his hands to his mouth, the ranger shouted—

"Hallo! who goes there—white or red?"

"White!" came the quick response. "Who are you?"

"Friends to all white men, and enemies to red-skins," answered the ranger, riding forward.

In a moment the rangers overtook the four horsemen, and greeted them warmly.

"Father!" exclaimed George Stanhope joyfully.

"My son!" cried Mr. Stanhope, grasping the young man's hands.

"And this is Layton with you—father, Eugene, why are you here?"

"We are looking for the lost darling," answered Mr. Stanhope. "George, Walter, have you found no trace of her?"

"We have found no trace of her, except that she is not among the Indians," answered George.

"Great Heaven! then where can she be?" cried the anxious father.

George Stanhope explained the suspicions which were entertained of the herdsman, Juan.

"I believe you are right," said Eugene Layton. "I am certain there is something wrong about this Mexican. Who are all these men with you, George—friends?"

"Captain Carrol and his rangers. By their efforts my friend and I were saved from a terrible death at the hands of the Camanches—and they are now going with us to aid in the search for poor Louise."

"Thanks, my friends—a father's gratitude is due to every one of you," said Mr. Stanhope.

"This is no time for talk," said Captain Carrol, abruptly. "If we would restore the maiden to her friends, we must not waste precious time."

The journey was continued for some distance in silence. Ere long the men were startled by hearing a shout from some one a short distance ahead. Captain Carrol paused, and called out—

"Who hails?"

"A friend," was the reply. "Is Mr. Stanhope and his friends among you?"

"Mr. Stanhope is here, and we are all his friends," shouted the ranger. "Come on, whoever you are, and tell us what you want."

"Where is Mr. Stanhope?" asked the stranger, as he rode forward among our friends.

"Here," said Mr. Stanhope. "Have you anything to tell me? If so, speak quick."

"Don't you know me? You have seen me before, I think," said the stranger.

"It is Carlos, the herdsman," cried George Stanhope.

"Yes, it is Carlos, the herdsman, and I have something important to tell you."

"What is it? Do you know anything of my daughter? If you do, for Heaven's sake do not keep us in suspense," said Mr. Stanhope, intensely excited.

"I will be brief and to the point," replied Carlos. "Your daughter Louise was stolen by your herdsman, Juan—and she is now concealed in a cave on Silver Creek, just above the ford."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Stanhope.

"The audacious villain!" said George, grinding his teeth together.

"Oh, my poor darling!" murmured Walter Darrell.

"Fellow, are you telling the truth?" asked Captain Carrol, sternly. "If you deceive us, your life shall pay for your treachery."

"I am telling the honest truth," answered Carlos, earnestly. "I have been riding since the middle of the afternoon to tell Mr. Stanhope of this. I attempted to rescue the girl myself while Juan was gone to the rancho this morning—but just as we got outside of the cave Juan returned, and fired at me with his revolver. The bullet only grazed my temple, but it rendered me insensible for some moments; and when I recovered consciousness, Juan had dragged the girl back into the cave. I knew it would be folly to attempt to aid her without help, so I crossed the stream and went at once to Mr. Stanhope's house, where I learned that he had gone in search of his daughter. I saddled the only horse in the stable—the boy Pompey informed me that Juan had taken four or five—and started in pursuit of Mr. Stanhope. If you wish to secure the poor girl from the power of a remorseless villain, follow me, and I will lead you directly to the cave."

"Shall we follow this lad?" asked the ranger, turning to Mr Stanhope.

"Most certainly; I am confident that we may trust him," replied the old gentleman. "Carlos, if we are successful in this enterprise, you shall be amply rewarded; but your companions must suffer just punishment for their crimes."

"I desire no reward, sir, except your forgiveness. I have been a thief and an outlaw—but if you will pardon my past crimes, I will try to lead a different life in the future."

"Then these tales of Indian raids were invented by Juan to conceal his own villainy?" said George Stanhope.

"Entirely, sir," replied Carlos. "The herdsmen are a regularly organized band of robbers, with Juan as captain and Gonzales as lieutenant. The cave of which I told you, is their secret retreat; and there, I think, are concealed large sums of money which they received for cattle stolen from you and others."

"I have been nicely swindled by a smooth-tongued villain; but I could forgive all this, had he not carried away my daughter. For this he shall hang, as surely as we get hold of him."

"The thing is to catch the rogue," remarked Captain Carrol. "If he gets wind of our approach, he will be off across the border with his prize ere we can overtake him."

"God forbid! Should he do that, we may never bring him to justice," exclaimed Mr. Stanhope.

"Every moment of delay is dangerous," said the leader of the rangers. "Forward, men—make your horses do their best. You, Carlos, lead the way, and be careful to take the most direct route, for I carry a six-shooter in my belt."

"You will have no occasion to use it on me," answered Carlos, as he urged his horse ahead of the others.

"On, boys, on!" cried the ranger; and the whole band went flying swiftly across the prairie.

For an hour or more, the race was continued without a pause. At length a faint, peculiar howl was heard in the distance, which seemed startlingly familiar to Captain Carrol's ear.

"Halt, boys, and listen a moment," he commanded.

The panting steeds were checked, and every ear listened intently. A low, distant rumbling, like the tramp of many horses, was heard. Presently a wild yell, or rather series of yells, distant, yet plainly audible, rang through the motionless air of night:

"Hoo-hoo-hoo-ah-ah-ah!"

"It is the Camanche war-whoop," cried Carrol. "The whole tribe is after us like a pack of wolves after their prey. Now, if you don't want red night-caps, let every man run for his life!"

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 50.)

THE CAPTAIN'S DREAM.

It was in that quiet time of year when none of the dangerous and treacherous little storms so frequent in the Mediterranean—known to sailors by the name of white squalls—disturb the tranquil serenity of its deep blue waters; when by day the warm and brilliant rays of the sun make the crest of every little ripple glitter and sparkle, till the surface of the sea resembles a dewy meadow at sunrise; and when at night the moon always rises clearly and brilliantly into a deep blue expanse of cloudless sky, studded with myriads of stars.

It was at such a time, and on such a night as this, somewhere between Beyrout and Malta, that the noble frigate Aster was cleaving her way through the dark waters—so quietly and smoothly that, but for the phosphorescent line of light which she left in her wake, and the ripples of brilliant foam which she scornfully dashed, with a murmur as of protest at their unwonted disturbance, from her shapely bow, could an observer have been near her, he might have thought he gazed on some beauteous vision of a ship, with all her billying sails gleaming white in the moonlight against a dark back-ground of sky, instead of a solid reality of oak and canvas, freighted with living men.

Captain Richard Montague had left his orders for the night, and had turned in some hours before. The middle watch had been mustered, and were stretched about the deck, amongst the ropes and between the guns, seeking such repose as the hard planks afforded their weary limbs—lulled to sleep by the almost imperceptible motion of the ship, and the soft, cool breeze, which was just sufficient to fill the swelling sails. Lieutenant Jones, the officer of the watch, was pacing up and down the quarter-deck, keeping a watchful eye on the sails and the helmsman, his hands buried deep in the pockets of his loose, easy fitting monkey jacket, and whistling softly to himself, "Home, sweet home." For myself, I was listlessly swinging my legs on the capstan, in a peaceful and contented frame of mind, drinking in the placid beauty of the star-spangled sky, and letting my thoughts idly roam away to my far-off American home, in which direction they were probably carried by the soft, low whistling of the lieutenant.

A tinkling sound was suddenly heard from below, and Mr. Jones stopped in his walk and his whistling to listen.

"The captain's bell, sir," said I, jumping off the capstan.

And so it was, as the sentry informed us in due time, with the additional information that I, the midshipman of the watch, was wanted in his cabin. So down I went, wondering not a little what he could possibly want.

Now, Captain Richard Montague, who was in command of the United States ship Aster, was not a crotchety or fidgety man; nor had he any of those bullying propensities that, alas! too many of our otherwise inestimable captains notoriously evince. He was a kind, courteous, gentlemanly man, firm and straightforward; very different from the old-school of blustering, swearing, rough and ready old seadogs that every reader of Marryatt's wonderful stories is inclined to associate with the idea of a "navy captain." He was one who maintained strict discipline in his ship, without the exercise of any undue severity. On shore he was jovial and affable to all, a keen sportsman, and an enthusiastic promoter of athletic sports, shooting-matches, and games for the amusement of his men—inciting both officers and men to a wholesome rivalry in such diversions, at all of which he himself was an adept. He was a man habitually cool and courageous in time of trouble and danger, and had won honors and distinctions for personal gallantry from a grateful country.

But when I went into his cabin on this particular night, he was not himself. Something appeared to have shaken the equilibrium of his habitually steady intellect, and I knew that it must be an affair of great importance, for his hand shook as he beckoned me to come closer, and he was looking pale and agitated in the extreme.

He was in his dressing-gown, sitting by a table on which a light was burning, and beside him was placed a glass of strong brandy and water.

He seemed about to communicate something; but, after some hesitation, appeared to change his mind, and asked abruptly if I went the rounds of the ship below regularly during my watch, according to his orders.

I replied that I did.

"That's right," he said, apparently a little relieved. And then, after a pause, he asked me, with considerable earnestness of tone and manner, if I had done so in that watch.

And, as he asked, he looked eagerly into my eyes as if to make sure that I was not deceiving him.

I answered that I had, most strictly and conscientiously.

He then asked me several other questions of a similar nature, to all of which I suppose I returned satisfactory answers, for he seemed much relieved, and dismissed me with a short laugh, and a pleasant "Good-night. Thank you." And before I shut his door I heard him mutter, "Pshaw! folly!" and laugh again.

To say that I was surprised by this extraordinary and unusual conduct on the part of Captain Montague, would not express half what I felt. There was much in the agitated manner of such a man to excite apprehension; for I knew him sufficiently well to be sure that he would not be frightened by a fancy. He was a sensible, well-educated man; and I had heard him sometimes, when the conversation had happened to turn on such subjects, ridiculing in an unassumed manner the foolish superstitions of the ignorant and timid. I could not think that he was suffering from nightmare, brought on by indigestion, for he was always exceedingly temperate. He had not been entertaining that evening, and he was in good health. Besides, I felt sure that he would himself have attributed such a thing, had it been the case, to its true cause; and the more I thought of it, the more convinced I became that there must be something of a serious and practical nature to have such a powerful effect on a man possessed of such a healthy nervous organization.

I was not, however, so much alarmed as curious. There arose in me a determination to solve the mystery—to discover if there really was anything wrong in the ship, and what it was. Conjecture on conjecture flitted through my puzzled brain, all equally wild and unreasonable. I had no clue to work on; but still I felt a burning desire to find out the meaning of it. So, briefly telling Lieutenant Jones that the captain had been talking about the rounds, and that I thought I had better go over the vessel again, I started off on my voyage of discovery, with a corporal and two lanterns, in quest of I knew not what.

I felt as if on the eve of some wonderful discovery as I began to go along the decks, peering with my lantern into the dark shade between the guns, through the men's messes, and into every dark hole or corner large enough to conceal a rat; but nothing rewarded my search. A large cat jumped out from under the muzzle of a gun, and startled me once; but that was all. Everything was quiet; only the heavy breathing of the watch below disturbed the stillness of the night between decks.

Down I went into the lower depths of the ship, thinking to myself that now I should know what it was. Here or nowhere must be concealed—what? I didn't know, but I thought that I must find something; but no, nothing rewarded my toil. I looked everywhere. I turned over everything, peered into the water tanks, tried the store room doors, crept into dusty recesses that, perhaps, no one had ever thought of trying to get into before since the ship was built; but the only result was, as might have been expected, to send a score or two of rats scampering in alarm over the deck, and get myself covered all over with dust and whitewash. So at last I had to give it up, hot and tired with my search, and just as wise as when I started.

Lieutenant Jones was clearly in a bad temper when I returned on deck.

"Where have you been all this time?" he demanded.

"Going the rounds, sir," I replied.

Mr. Jones, however, would not believe I had taken so long to perform this duty, and made some unpleasant remarks about "skulking."

The fact of the matter was, that during my absence it had suddenly struck him that he was very thirsty, and that he would be the better for a glass of grog. Now, there was a bottle of rum in his cabin, also a tumbler and water. He was very fond of rum and water; but duty forbade his going to get it. He did not dare send one of the men into his cabin; and, as I was the only other person he could send, it is scarcely to be wondered at that he should have become more and more incensed with me as the time wore on and his thirst increased. As soon as I saw how things were, I came to the obvious conclusion that the best method of appeasing his wrath was to quench his thirst. I went down to his cabin as quickly as I could, and mixed him a glass of extra strength to compensate him for the delay.

I was hurrying on deck with it, when, just as I reached the top of the hatchway, I saw what arrested my footsteps, and rooted me to the spot in amazement.

The captain had come up the after-ladder, which was close to his cabin door, and was advancing quickly forward—a bright streak of moonlight, from which I was shaded by the sails, throwing a light as strong almost as day over and around him. His coat was open, as if thrown hurriedly on, his feet were slippered, his cap was pushed back on his head, exposing to view a face on which the signs of horror were strongly marked, eyes starting forward and bloodshot, lips apart and quivering, and cheeks the pallor of which appeared quite ghastly in the cold blue moonlight.

He evidently did not observe me—though I could see him sufficiently well to note every detail of his appearance—but, with hurried footsteps, made straight for the officer of the watch, who was standing on the end of the bridge, with his back turned to him, trying to make out a light that had been reported on the weather bow.

As soon as I recovered from the shock his wild and extraordinary appearance had given me, I went back to Mr. Jones's cabin, and put down the glass of grog—for it was out of the question that an officer of the watch should take such a thing when the captain was on deck—and came up again at once.

"Quick, the carpenter!—quick!" I heard the captain shout as I came up the ladder, and his voice was strangely agitated.

"What can be the matter? One would think the ship was sinking. She must have sprung a bad leak in his cabin," I thought.

"Quick—the carpenter! Send for him!" he shouted again, catching sight of me.

And I sent two men after the two or three who had already gone in search of that officer.

Presently the carpenter came up, rather astonished, as may be supposed, by such an unusual and hurried summons, and not a little alarmed.

"What is the matter, sir?" he whispered as he passed me.

"I'm sure I don't know," I replied; "but make haste. The captain's in a dreadful way about something or other."

The bell struck four times, signifying that it was two o'clock. The captain started at the sound, and again called for the carpenter.

"Coming, sir," replied Mr. James, as he sprang on the bridge.

"Bring that case on deck," said the captain.

"What case, sir?" said Mr. James.

"In the foremost locker, the starboard side of your store-room, is a case, marked 'Ward-room Officers.' Bring it on deck, quick."

There was no disobeying this peremptory order—there was no questioning it; but it was a very odd one to give. What could the captain want with a case, the property of the ward room officers, in the first place? and, in the second, how came he to find out, in the middle of the night, that it was there, in a place where it certainly had no right to be? and then, why was it there at all, and not in the proper store-room? It was strange, too, most of all, that a case of ward-room stores could have agitated the captain in a way it appeared to have done, and have actually brought him on deck in the middle of the night, for no other purpose seemingly than to send down for it. Why could he not have waited till the morning, at least, if he was determined to have it brought up? What could it contain? That was the puzzling question I could not settle; and the carpenter could give me no information.

"I don't know what it is," he said. "It came on board just before we left Beyrout. The captain was out of the ship at the time, I remember, and the paymaster asked me to stow it away in my store-room, as they had filled theirs up. I thought it was only pickles or jam; but we shall soon see what's in it."

The case came on deck, and some men accompanied it, with tools for forcing it open. I drew the captain's attention to them, for he was looking the other way. He turned round, and looked at the box, and said—

"Yes, that's it. Now, two men take it up very carefully—don't let it fall, mind!—and bring it up here on the bridge."

His voice was rather husky; but he seemed to have regained his composure, though his face was still very pale.

There was nothing peculiar outwardly about the case in which so much interest was centred.

It was about three feet long, by a foot and a half wide and deep, made of common deal, roughly put together, and with a narrow iron band round each end. The name of some dealer at Beyrout was stamped on it in black letters, but so much defaced as to be almost illegible. Underneath that was printed, "Ward room Officers, U. S. S. Aster." Outwardly, it was nothing. What could it contain?

"Now," said the captain, when the two men were beside him, "give it a good swing, and launch it overboard. One, two, three, and over!"

A dull splash—the mysterious case was gone!

Down, down, through many fathoms of blue water it sank, and with it carried a secret of such dread import that it had blanched the cheek and palsied the hand of a man accustomed to the perils of the sea from his youth, and who, in the most critical moments of danger, had never before shown to those around him that the sensation of fear was known to him.

Down, down it sank, the waters closed over it, the mighty sea took it to herself, forever hiding it from the sight of men. The clear, bright moon shone on the place; the bubbles that marked the spot burst and melted away. The restless ocean showed no trace of the place where the mysterious box was engulfed; but the ripples danced to and fro in the moonbeams, as they had danced before, and the ship glided silently and swiftly away.

I was sorely disappointed. I thought, of course, when the case was ordered to be brought on deck, that it would be opened before the captain's eyes, and I should be made acquainted with the reason of his unusual excitement.

The old carpenter stared aghast.

"Good Lord!" he ejaculated, "what have come over him? Depend upon it, he's seen a ghost."

And he wiped the perspiration from his brow, for he was a superstitious old man.

"Ghost! What's a ghost got to do with a box of pickles?" sneered old Tom Rattles, the boatswain's mate—a privileged oddity. "It's my opinion he's gone stark, staring mad."

"Them things in that 'are box weren't his'n to shuck overboard. He'll be a chuckin' my bag over next," grumbled another man—a discontented and insubordinate character.

I moved away. The conversation was not meant for my ears, and I had no wish to play the eavesdropper.

Full an hour did Captain Montague pace up and down the deck with the officer of the watch; and for that space of time I had to curb my impatience to hear the story which I knew he would have to tell me, and for the same length of time had the thirsty lieutenant to wait for his glass of grog; but when at last the captain did again seek his cabin, I lost no time in bringing him up the long-delayed refreshment, and, whilst drinking it, he detailed to me the following particulars:

Captain Montague had turned in as usual after giving his orders for the night to the officer of the first watch, and having nothing to disturb him, and being in good health, he was soon fast asleep. How long he slept he did not know; but suddenly he heard a loud cry of "Fire!" Only half-awakened, and not sure whether the voice was in his cabin or outside, he started up, and involuntarily said—

"Where?"

To which question he distinctly heard a voice *in his cabin* answer—

"A case of inflammables in the foremost locker, starboard side of the carpenter's store-room, marked 'Ward-room Officers,' has ignited."

Just then the bell struck four times. He sprang out of bed, and searched for the owner of the voice; but no one was there. Then he rang his bell, and summoned the sentry outside, and questioned him as to who had come into his cabin; but the sentry—a reliable man—was certain that nobody had passed his post. The times, too, was close on eight bells. So, satisfied that he must have been dreaming, and rather ashamed of having agitated himself about nothing, he dismissed the sentry, and proceeded to turn in once more; but he could not succeed in quite dismissing the subject from his mind, and when he at last fell asleep again, he was visited with this fearful dream:—

The vessel was the victim of that most awful catastrophe that can happen to a ship at sea—she was in flames. He was on deck, amidst a scene of confusion and horror perfectly indescribable, enveloped in hot and choking smoke, through which the lurid glare of the angry flames cast a dingy red light on the forms of dead and dying men; while on all sides the shrieks of anguish and despair, wrung from the scorched and drowning sailors, mingled with the roar of the flames and the splashing and hissing of the burning fragments of the vessel, as they separated themselves from her hull, and fell into the water.

He woke. Everything was quiet and peaceful. The moon was shining brightly through the port, and the steady tramp of the sentry keeping time to the ticking of his clock was the only sound to be heard.

Having steadied his nerves with a glass of brandy and water, and trying to dismiss the terrible recollection of his hideous dream from his mind, he again fell asleep; but only to suffer a repetition of the horrible nightmare.

This time he sent for me on waking, and excited my curiosity and apprehension, as I have related, by his agitated manner; but still my assurance of the safety of the vessel was insufficient to banish the vision.

A third time he imagined himself in the burning ship; again he was a spectator of all the horrors of the conflagration; again he was standing amid that fearful scene of confusion and death, with all its dread reality intensified; again he saw hundreds of his own men dying fearful deaths around him, without being able to render the least assistance, while the hot flames darted their forked tongues at him; and again, as the dense suffocating smoke closed around him, did he find himself the victim of mad despair. Again, too, he woke to find it but a dream, and all still and quiet as before.

He could bear it no longer; the vision was too palpable—too awful. He thought of the mysterious voice. Could it be a supernatural warning? He did not believe in such things; but then he dared not risk a repetition of the dream. So he rushed on deck, and sent for the case, of the existence of which he had no positive certainty until it was brought up, which wonderful corroboration of what he had just heard convinced him at once of its dangerous character, and induced him to order it to be immediately thrown overboard.

Such was the story Mr. Jones related to me. How much of it originated in his own brain, aided by the glass of grog, I cannot say; but all that I had remarked in the captain's behavior was singularly corroborative of his tale. I will therefore leave the reader to form his own conclusions, and account for this "curious case," if he can; only remarking, by the way, that it was afterward ascertained to have been filled with some flue of a dangerously inflammable oil for burning in the ward-room lamps.

Health of Cities.

The New York Evening Mail contains a long article on the quarterly reports of the British Registrar-General, in reference to the health of cities in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. It says:

"One of the latest of these reports bears upon the comparative mortality of large cities in different parts of the world, as shown by the returns of their local registration system, or the admitted number of deaths. It is needless to premise that the death-rate of the several cities, as given by the English Registrar-General, often and sometimes widely differs from that deduced by other statisticians. With such discrepancies we have nothing to do at present, nor is it our business to either explain or harmonize them. At the same time, it will be permitted us to express the opinion that the British official is quite as likely to be correct in his computations as any of the other mortality calculators whose percentages are, every now and then, precipitated upon the public. Moreover, when an Englishman is so oblivious of tradition and prejudice as to frankly put an American city at the very head of all the large cities of the world in the matter of healthfulness, it would be ungracious in us certainly not to accept such evidence of his impartiality as lending trustworthiness to his statements generally.

"According to the report referred to, then, the annual death rate per thousand inhabitants of certain prominent cities is as follows:—Philadelphia, 22 1; London, 22 7; Paris, 24 4; Bombay, 27 6; Berlin, 29 9; New York, 30 1; Turin, 30 4; Florence, 31 6; Rome, 32 2; Vienna, 34 4; Madras, 37 6. These figures are full of temptation to sanitary scientists and amateur critics, and they are also full of surprises to those who not only think a good many American cities are far healthier than Philadelphia, but who also can hardly accept the notion that Bombay, for example, is so much more healthy a city than New York. And the recently-published results of Dr. Russell's computations in regard to municipal mortality are also so widely divergent from those upon which we have commented that it would seem as if somebody should rise to explain the discrepancies. When the English Registrar-General interprets the same mortality reports to show a death-rate in New York of 30.1, which Dr. Russell interprets to indicate a rate of 32, it is pretty evident that both gentlemen cannot be right. But, somehow, it is remarkable that the more favorable figures are furnished by the English official.

"As to Philadelphia's surpassing salubrity, accepting it as a fact, the explanation appears to lie in the absence of that tenement-house system which is at once the pest and the curse of most large cities. That city, more truthfully than any other large city, may boast of having a sufficient supply of small, cheap dwellings suited to the necessities of the working class, and the natural result is the good general health of that class of her population. There is in this fact a powerful argument in favor of some movement in other cities—in New York particularly—toward improving sanitarily the dwellings of the poor. Until this is done all our large cities must bear the odium of a heavy death rate, and Philadelphia must continue to be held up as the model of salubrity. There are persons who would prefer to die in New York to living in Philadelphia. But until our poor people all feel that way it will be in order for our city property owners to emulate their own class in the city of Brotherly Love."

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SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, AUG. 16, 1873.

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LETTERS FROM ZIG.

OLD PEOPLE.

What ancient tribe of heathens was it who used to put all their old folks out of the way by putting them out of the world, when they became so aged that they were entirely useless to community and a dead weight to their relations? I forget who it was now, but I'm very certain there was such a tribe of ancient heathens. It was a very horrible thing indeed to do. But I confess I've wondered time and again whether there were not people in these civilized days who wished with all their hearts that it wasn't a horrible thing to do. I'm sure I shouldn't blame some folks I've known, if they did wish it. And you can call me a heathen, too, if you like. Besides that, you can also remind me that if I live long enough, I, too, will be a disagreeable, helpless, useless old person, and how will I like it if somebody talks of putting me out of the world? Very well, if I'm as vicious as some old people I've known, I only hope to the gracious goodness some kind friend will knock me on the head and put me out of the world. Now, while I'm in my right senses, I say I hope somebody will do just that thing. It will be the greatest possible mercy to me.

I know just as well as you do, the reverence and tenderness which are due to a good old age. Heaven forbid that I should ever forget or neglect that! But suppose it isn't a good old age at all, but a bad old age. Suppose it is a very mean old age, hateful, vicious, quarrelsome and cruel, what then? Are respect and tenderness due all the same to an old age like that? I say no!

What human heart that ever beat could feel one spark of reverence or affection for the old age of such a monster as King Henry VIII., fierce-tempered, gouty and cruel, pursuing with relentless devilishness and fury every mortal who misinterpreted a whim or disregarded a fancy of the old beast? When he was on his deathbed, it was only at the risk of her head that the sixth wife of this old Bluebeard could go to him and ask him any question of importance. I contend that it isn't possible to feel any kindly emotion for such an old beast as that, and he doesn't deserve any. Old age should always be provided for—if it is helpless; should be respected—if it is respectable; treated with tenderness—if it is tender toward others; loved, if it is lovable. Otherwise, I confess I can't see the obligation. Because, you see, we make our own old age while we are yet young, and we are responsible for it.

An old drunkard or vixen is not entitled to a particle more consideration than a young drunkard or vixen—not so much as a young one, indeed, because the old drunkard or vixen is old enough to know and be better. There is nothing in this life more terribly repulsive than an old man or woman who has outlived all the good and kindly emotions of humanity, but has permitted the vices and evil passions of poor human nature to grow in size and intensity with the growing years, until there is nothing else left. I have seen old people who have really seemed to me utterly destitute of a spark of anything good or pleasant in their souls.

It is the sorrowful fate of a dear, good lady whom I know—living in one of Queen Victoria's possessions—to be saddled with a grizzly old human cat and nuisance. That's exactly what I mean to say—a grizzly old human cat and nuisance. My friend is one of the kindest, sweetest-tempered women in the world—and her mortal pilgrimage is one mortal purgatory, just from this grizzly old cat. The grizzly old cat is no relative of the sweet-tempered lady, and has no shadow of claim on her—but by a mysterious dispensation of Providence, wherefore I know not, this old cat has been permitted to stick her claws into my friend's back and hold them there. She has the vilest, longest, most abusive tongue that ever was let loose in a wicked old woman's head—and my friend gets a blue "going over" from that vile, foul tongue, about four times a week. My friend was gently reared, among kindly, refined people, who thought too much of themselves and one another to descend to vile billingsgate, and the demonish old vixen's clack shocks her inexpressibly. What can she do? If it were I, I'd be awfully tempted to shove her into an empty room and lock her up till she promised good behavior; but my friend is too good and gentle for that. She just submits, and lets the old cat rave. That would be well enough if the old cat were insane. But she isn't. She is just so naturally brimfull of Old Nick that she can't let anybody about her have an hour's rest.

Several times my friend had occasion to leave home during the absence of the old cat, looking her house up, of course. And as sure as you are alive, that old cat came home, and finding the house locked, smashed the windows in to obtain entrance, for no other earthly reason than to show my poor friend that she meant to have her own way. Good reader of THE POST, what would you have done with the old cat? Suppose she were your mother-in-law, or your wife's aunt, what would you do? Any decided measures of resistance you might take would bring down upon you the hue and cry of the whole neighborhood, for unkindness and cruel treatment toward old age, and you a quiet, respectable person, lady-like and attending to your own business, dreading nothing so much as to be talked about. I myself wouldn't care a pinch of snuff for all that, but then I'm an outlaw, and never did care half as much about what other people thought of me as what I thought of myself.

The neighborhood people don't know the old cat, you see. If a stranger or neighbor, lady or gentleman, steps inside the door, the old cat, deceitful as the father of lies, becomes at once as mild and sweet as new milk; and if you were a stranger to the household, and should spend an hour with her, you would go away with the impression that this aged vixen was the sprightliest, pleasantest, most intelligent old lady you had met in an age. That's all you would know about it. My friend has some little children, dearer to her than her life. She is trying to bring them up to be truthful, courteous-mannered ladies and gentlemen, and to love and look up to their mother for what she is, their best earthly friend. The old fiend of a woman tells these innocent little ones that their mother is a liar, a mean wretch, and a lazy, slovenly creature. Can my friend choke the old cat, or slap her in the mouth, or put her outdoors? No; she can do neither. What can she do? I wish you'd tell me.

Now, all this is merely a black and white statement of a black fact. I have no spite at the old cat. She never did me any harm, and she isn't my mother-in-law, thank God! But I never saw such a compound of pure spitefulness boiled down, in my life. And I wish you would tell me honestly what you would do if you had this old cat saddled upon your back, and whether you would think it your duty to treat her with reverence and tenderness and that sort of thing. I confess to a firm conviction that any reverence or tenderness to such an old reprobate of a woman would be pearls before swine.

I know another lady—in South America, we will say—who is a martyr to her grandmother. She has given up all the things which make other women happy, for the sake of this old woman, living alone with her because nobody else can live with her. She gave up the lover of her youth and the sweet hope of a happy home of her own, because she thought her duty lay with her grandmother, and she would ask no man to put up with the old woman's ways. She earns the living for both herself and the old woman, and yet not one moment's peace does she have in the home which her industry secures for the two. The old woman scolds her from morning till night, pursues her with an eternal, infernal, nag, nag, nag, every moment she is inside the house. There are whining old women, nagging old women and vicious old women, I've noticed. This old grandmother is a nagging old woman. She nagged her husband out of the world, they say. If her grand-daughter has any friends come to the house, the old woman openly insults them; if any of her own friends come, she puts in the time complaining to them of the neglect, extravagance and unkindness of the dear good girl but for whom the ungrateful old idiot would go to the poor-house. Respect and tenderness? Don't talk to me!

If this kind of old people I've been speaking of were only crazy they could be put in a lunatic asylum. But they are not crazy. They are only just wicked, and ugly, and bad-tempered. They are just people who have let the evil qualities of human nature grow on them so long that the good qualities are quite crowded out. Sometimes I think there ought to be an asylum provided for those old people who are too wicked and mean-tempered to live with their relations. A place, you know, where the old cats and dogs of the human race will be made to behave themselves. They can be made to behave themselves. There never was a human will so strong that some force couldn't be found which was stronger. Finally, I'm willing to eat my own sauce. If, when I come to be an old woman—and I hope I'll never live to be very old—if I'm vicious, selfish, and abominable, then, in mercy to the remembrance of the little good there has been in my heart, in the past, may some good friend shut me up where I can't show myself off!

It is not pleasant to think of losing one's youth. I confess that to me there is something horrible in the thought of that mental and physical decay which attends extreme old age. If there is one thing in this life that I pray for, it is that I may be kindly taken out of the world before the time of that decay shall steal upon me. But still, if we live long enough, old age is inevitable as death. We can't shove it off, but we can make the best of it. Mental decay may, to a great extent, be avoided. Mind is immortal, so mind ought to go on improving and ripening to the very last. We can cultivate a taste for reading and writing, and intellectual pursuits and enjoyments, in our youth, and in old age these enjoyments will stand by us to the very last. We can fight our evil tempers and drive them from the soul while we are young, so that when we are old they will not rule over us to torment the friends who have to take care of us. While we are yet young, we can fight and conquer avarice, deceit, discontent, and bad temper, and learn in time to let the good part of human nature rule us, justice, generosity, truthfulness, and love to our neighbor, so we shall prepare for ourselves a serene, respectable, and kindly old age. Because I say we do make our own old age what we choose. Let us make the best we can of our old age while we are young, the best for ourselves and for all around us, so we shall endure it peacefully till the Master gently call us across the river to the beautiful country where all will bloom in immortal youth. ZIG.

☞ Some persons are capable of making great sacrifices, but few are capable of concealing how much the effort has cost them; and it is this concealment that constitutes their value.

"LARS."

We trust that many of the readers of THE POST have already read this last poem by Bayard Taylor. But for the benefit of those who have not, and in order to incite them to a full perusal of the poem, we shall state briefly its purport.

"Lars" is a pastoral of Norway. The scene opens on a Sunday—when Brita, the heroine, with the other village girls of Ulvik, and the young men also, take their way to the distant church. Lars and Per—rivals for the heart and hand of Brita—join them on the way:

"And Brita walked
Between them where the path was broad, but when
It narrowed to such track as tread the sheep,
Round-lasting slope der, and o'er rocky spur,
To reach the rare, sweet heritage, one went close
Before her, one behind, and unto both
With equal cheer and equal kindliness
Her speech was given; so both were glad of heart."

Lars is a herdsman—Per a sailor. The rivalry between them gradually deepens, until it comes to an open quarrel for Brita's hand at the dance. As for Brita, partly because she does not know her own mind, and partly because of a little spice of coquetry, she will not avow any preference for either. So, in old Norse style, and according to a custom that has come down from the times of Thor and Odin, they resolve to fight it out. We give the combat in the poet's words:

"Then both drew off and threw aside their coats,
Their broidered waistcoats, and the silken scarves
About their necks; but Per growled 'All!' and made
His body bare to where the leathern belt
Is clasped between the breast-bone and the hip.
Lars did the same; then, setting tight the belts,
Both turned a little: the low daylight clad
Their forms with manful fairness, beauty now
Of life, so warm and ripe and glorious, yet
So near the beauty terrible of Death.
All saw the mature age, and understood;
And two stepped forth, two men with grizzled hair
And earnest faces, grasped the hooks of steel
In either's belt, and drew them breast to breast,
And in the belts made fast each other's hooks.
And utter stillness on the people fell
While this was done: each face was stern and strange,
And Brita, powerless to turn her eyes,
Heard herself cry, and started: 'Per, O Per!'

"When those two backward stepped, all saw the flash
Of knives, the lift of arms, the instant clench
Of hands that held and hands that strove to strike:
All heard the sound of quick and hard-drawn breath,
And naught beside; but sudden red appeared,
Splashed on the white of shoulders and of arms.
Then, thighs intwined, and all the body's force
Called to the mixed resistance and assault,
They reeled and swayed, 'et go the guarding clutch,
And struck out madly. Per drew back, and aimed
A deadly blow, but Lars embraced him close,
Reached o'er his shoulder and from underneath
Thrust upward, while upon his ribs the knife,
Glancing, transfixed the arm. A gasp was heard:
The struggling limbs relaxed; and both, still bound
Together, fell upon the bloody floor.

"Some forward sprang, and loosed, and lifted them
A little; but the head of Per hung back,
With lips apart and dim blue eyes unshut,
And all the passion and the pain were gone
Forever. 'Dead!' a voice exclaimed; then she,
Like one who stands in darkness, till a blaze
Of blinding lightning pa ts the whole broad world,
Saw, burst her stony trance, and with a cry
Of love and grief and horror, threw herself
Upon his breast, and kissed his passive mouth,
And loud lamented: 'O, too late I know
I love thee best, my Per, my sweetheart Per!
Thy will was strong, thy ways were masterful;
I did not guess that love might so command!
Thou wert my ruler: I resisted thee,
But blindly: O, come back!—I will obey.'"

As to poor Lars, Brita informs him that she does not wish him life, except to show him that she can hate, instead of loving him. And this, told of course with incidents and details that we have not room for, ends the first Book.

The second portion of the story tells how Lars, heart-sick, leaves Norway, and finds a home among the Swedish settlers on the Delaware.

"So Lars went onward, losing hope of good,
To where upon her hill, fair Wilmington
Looks to the river over marshy meads."

Leaving the town, he wandered

"Where deeper vales bring down
The winding brooks from Pennsylvanian hills,"

and at length came to a farmhouse, where

"The garden lay upon a sunny knoll,
At or back dark behind it, and the barn,
With wide, warm wings, a giant mother-bird,
Seemed brooding o'er its empty summer nest."

A woman comes forth from the farmhouse,

"No servant-maid more plain
In her attire, yet, as she nearer drew
Her still, sweet face, and pure, untroubled eyes,
Spoke gentle blood. A browner dove she seemed,
Without the shifting iris of the neck,
And when she spake her voice was like a dove's,
Soft, even-toned, and sinking in the heart."

This is the daughter of the house, Ruth Mendenhall. She bids Lars to come in, gives him his supper, and her father, Ezra, engages him as a laborer on his farm.

We have not space to trace the events and influences through which Lars finally becomes a convert to the Quaker faith, and the husband of Ruth, which completes the second portion of the story.

The third Book opens with a sweet picture of Lars and Ruth in their wedded lives.

"So Lars and Ruth beside each other learned
What neither, left unwedded, could have won:
He how reliant and how fond the heart
Whose love seemed almost pity, she how firm
And masterful the nature, which appealed
There for support where hers had felt no strain;
And both, how solemn, sweet, and wonderful
The life of man. Their life, indeed, was still,
Too still for aught save blessing, for a time.
All things were ordered: plenty in the house
And fruitfulness of field and meadow made
Light labor, and the people came and went,
According to their old and friendly ways."

But Lars has something on his spirit that disquiets it. It is the fatal issue of the combat in Norway, which lies on his soul like the stain of murder. He must make expiation by going back, and trying to spread a better knowledge of the truth, so that such wicked old customs no longer shall hold their place in a Christian land. Finally, Ruth with him, they set out for his native country With no hurry, but in quiet, deliberate Quaker fashion, they pursue their journey—finally

"At last, one quiet afternoon, they crossed
The fell from Granvin, and below them saw
The roofs of Ulvik and the orchard-trees
Shining in richer colors, and the fiord,
A dim blue gloom between Hardanger heights,—
The strife and peace, the plenty and the need."

Of course, the return of Lars, and in Quaker garb, makes a sensation. But what Lars had expected, soon comes to pass—Per's brother, according to the old heathen custom, demands blood for blood. We quote the whole scene, for while very simply, it is very powerfully told:—

"Stood Thorsten, brother of the slaughtered Per,
Alike a stalwart fisher of the fiord,
Heard who had come, and published unto all
The debt of blood he meant to claim of Lars.
'The coward, only, comes as man of peace,
To shirk such payment!' were his bitter words.
And they were carried unto Lars: but he
Spake firmly: 'Well I know what he would claim:
The coward, knowing, comes not.' Nothing more;
Nor could they guess the purpose of his mind.
In little Ulvik all the people learned
What words had passed, and there were friends of both;
But Lars kept silent, walked the ways unarmed,
And preached the pardon of an utmost wrong.
Now Thorsten saw in this but some device
To try his own forbearance; his revenge
Grew hungry for an answering cruelty,
And weary of its shame; and so, at last,
He sent this message: 'If Lars Thorstensen
Deny not blood he spilled, and guilt thereof,
Then let him meet me by the Graven lake,'—
On such a day.
When came the message, Lars
Spake thus to all his kindred: 'I will go:
I do deny not my blood-guiltiness.
This thing hath rested on my soul for years,
And must be met.' Then unto Ruth he turned:
'I go alone: abide thou with our kin.'
But she arose and answered: 'Nay, I go!
Forbid me not, or I must disobey,
Which were a cross. I give thee to the Lord,
His helpless instrument, to break or save;
Think not my weakness shall confuse thy will!'
Lars laid his hand upon her head, and all
Were strangely melted, though he spoke no more,
Nor then, nor on the way to Graven lake.

"Lo! there were many gathered, kin of both,
Or friends, or folk acquainted with the tale,
And curious for its end. The summer sky
Was beautiful above them, and the trees
Stood happy, stretching forth forgiving arms;
Yet sultry thunder in the hearts of men
Brooded, the menace of a rain of blood.
Lars paused not when he came. He saw the face
Of Thorsten, ruddy, golden-haired like Per's,
Amid the throng, and straightway went to him
And spake: 'I come, as thou invitest me.
My brother, I have shed thy brother's blood:
What wouldst thou I should do thee, to atone?'

"'Give yours,' cried Thorsten, stepping back a pace.

"'That murderous law we took from heathen sires,'
Said Lars, 'is guilt upon a Christian land.
I do abjure it. Will thou have my blood,
Nor less, I dare not lift a hand for thine.'

"'You came not, then, to fight, though branded here
A coward?'

"'Nay, nor ever,' answered Lars;
'But, were I a coward, could I calmly bear
Thy words?' Then Thorkil, friend of Thorsten, cried
'These people, in their garments, I have heard,
Put on their peace; or else some magic dwells
In shape of hat or color of the coat,
To make them harmless as a browsing hare.
That Lars we knew had danger in his eyes;
But this one,—why, uncover, let us see!'
Therewith struck off the hat. And others there
Fell upon Lars, and tore away his coat,
Nor ceased the outrage until they had made
His body bare to where the leathern belt
Is clasped between the breast-bone and the hip.

"Around his waist they buckled then a belt,
And brought a knife, and thrust it in his hand.
The open fingers would not hold: the knife
Fell from them, struck, and quivered in the sod.
Thorsten, apart, had also bared his breast,
And waited, beautiful in rosy life.
Then Thorkil and another drew the twain
Together, hooked the belts of each, and strove
Once more to arm the passive hand of Lars:
In vain: his open fingers would not hold
The knife, which fell and quivered in the sod.
He looked in Thorsten's eyes; great sorrow fell
Upon him, and a tender human love.
'I did not this,' he said; 'nor will resist.
If thou art minded so, then strike me dead:
But thou art sacred, for the blood I spilled
Is in thy veins, my brother: yea, all blood
Of all men sacred is in thee.' His arms
Hung at his side: he did not shrink or sway:
His flesh touched Thorsten's where the belts were joined,
And felt its warmth. Then twice did Thorsten lift
His armed hand, and twice he let it sink:
An anguish came upon his face: he groaned,
And all that heard him marvelled at the words:
'Have pity on me; turn away thine eyes:
I cannot slay thee while they look on me!'

"'If I could end this bloody custom so,
In all the land, nor plant a late remorse
For what is here thy justice,' answered Lars,
'I could not say thee nay. Yet, if the deed
Be good, thou shouldst have courage for the deed!'
Once more looked Thorsten in those loving eyes,
And shrank, and shuddered, and grew deadly pale,
Till, with a grasp for breath, as one who drowns
Draws, when he dips again above the wave,
He loosed the clutching belts, and sat him down
And hid his face: they heard him only say:
'Twere well that I should die, for very shame!'
Lars heard, and spake to all: 'The shame is mine,
Whose cowa'd heart betrayed me into guilt.
I slew my brother Per, nor sought his blood:
Thou, Thorsten, wilt not mine; I read thy heart.
But ye, who trample on the soul of man
In still demanding he shall ne'er outgrow
The savage in his veins, through faith in Good,
Who Thorsten rule, even as ye ruled myself,—
I call ye to repent! That God we left,
White Balder, were more merciful than this:
If one, henceforward, cast on Thorsten shame,
The Lord shall smite him when the judgment comes!'

"Never before, such words in such a place
Were preached by such apostle. Bared, as though
For runes of death, while rod Berserker rage
Kindled in some, in others smouldered out,
He raised his hand and pointed to the sky:
Far off, behind the silent fells, there rolled
A sudden thunder. Ruth, who all the while
Moved not nor spoke, stood forth, and o'er her face
There came the glory of an opening heaven.
Now that she knew the habit of the folk,
She spake not: but she clothed the form of Lars
In silence, and the women, weeping, helped.
Then Thorsten rose, and seeing her, he said:
'Thou art his wife; they tell me thou art good.
I am no bloodier than thy husband was
Before he knew thee: hast thou aught to say?'
She took his hand and spake, as one inspired:
'Thou couldst not make thyself a man of blood!
This is thy seed of blessing: let it grow!
Gladness of heart, and peace, and honored name
Shall come to thee: the unrighteous, cruel law
Is broken by thy hands, no less than his
Who loves thee, and would sooner die than harm!'
'They speak the truth,' said Thorsten; 'thou art good,
And it were surely bitter grief to thee
If I had slain him. Go! his blood is safe
From hands of mine.'"

We have left ourselves little room to tell how Brita—still unmarried—became reconciled to Lars through Ruth, and how finally when Lars and Ruth left Norway again for their Pennsylvania home, Brita went with them.

There is a calm and sustained power in this poem, which we think puts it at the head of Mr. Taylor's productions, and will give him an even higher place than he has heretofore held as a poet. In truth there are few American poems that equal it.

The faults of "Lars" are simply the faults of nearly all our poets nowadays, from Tennyson down. The metal they use is too soft—it may be of a very fine quality in many respects, but it has too soft a sound. It lacks hardness, tone, ring, brilliancy. Their verse is not sonorous. And with this want of brilliancy of tone, is a corresponding want of vividness of conception and expression. There is no longer sufficient effort to condense, and flash a meaning upon the mind. The lightning is all sheet lightning—the thunder lengthened out into a lullaby. The royal sound no longer "shakes the heavens." We judge, and hope, that William Morris, with his interminable milk-and-watery muse, who has carried sweetness and softness almost to the extreme of puerility, is the last minstrel of this school, and that the poetic world may now recoil into some more manly and vigorous utterance. Better even the drum and fife, for a change, than

"One weak, washy, everlasting flood"

of such "dainty lays and dulcet melodies." Amid so much flute and flageolet playing, the soul longs for the inspiring blast of the trumpet, the tumultuous clash of the cymbals, and the grand thunder of the organ.

We are glad to see that the verse of "Lars" grows stronger and more compact as the story progresses. In the opening pages the ear detects an occasional strain like Tennyson; but the latter portion is the poet's own verse. Still, if we were Mr. Taylor, we would never read another line of Tennyson or Morris, but take a course of Shakspeare, Milton and Byron. For his muse shows still a constant growth—which can be said of very few of our poets—and he has only reached that age when a great poet should be able to do his greatest work. And if Mr. Taylor can only get a little more ring and flash into his verse, in twenty years from this time we may be able to write after his name, "this is our greatest poet." H. P.

☞ The publishers of Lord Lytton's works paid him $150 000 in nineteen years, in copyright royalty on his novels. Many a first-class book publisher made in the same time five to ten times as much. Your Murrays and Harpers and Appletons make their millions, where your Bulwers and Thackerays and Dickens make their hundreds of thousands.

HOMESICK.

BY MARIE S. LADD.

'Tis idle to laud this river's flow,
That babbles a weary song,
I know of bright waters that come and go
And murmur sweet music along.

I dream of the water's rippling play,
Of the rocks and shining sand,
Of the graceful flowers that bend and sway
In my own dear native land.

Bright flowers I know your meadows throng,
Your springs are pure and clear,
Your rivers are wide, and deep, and strong,
But my heart is homesick here.

Ah, dearer to me the hawthorn row
Or the breath of the wild blush rose,
Where the butterfly floats in the dingle low,
And the notched-leaf sweet-fern grows.

For there where the water drops pure as pearls,
Or leaps into sparkling foam,
And the gray smoke over the maple curls,
Oh! there is my native home.

Biographical Sketches.

CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

In A. D., 1625, the prophets and astrologers attached to the Court of Sweden, made a serious mistake. Gustavus Adolphus, surnamed the Lion of the North, was then king of Sweden, and as heir to the throne was hoped for Maria Eleonora, the queen, and her warlike liege-lord imparted their dreams to the astrologers. These sages deliberated, and having consulted the sun and stars, confidently declared that the expected child would be a boy, and as the king ardently longed for a male heir, the prediction probably found favor in his eyes. When the time which was to decide the matter approached, the king impatiently awaited the entrance of the attendant with the news. At last his sister, Princess Catharine, entered, and announced that the anticipated boy was a girl! Both the king and queen bore the disappointment "as well as could be expected;" the would-be prophets, however, were at first rather cast down, but they soon recovered their equanimity, and asserted that the girl would, at least, be a man in mind and character.

Gustavus resolved not to leave nature unassisted to fulfil this prediction. He purposed to form the young princess into a warrior-queen. "When but three years old," we are informed, "she, as a soldier's daughter should, crowed and clapped her tiny hands at the blare of trumpets and roar of cannon." Besides imbuing his daughter with a taste for the bloody pageants of war, Gustavus, rather inconsistently, desired that she should be well-grounded in the Scriptures and in the Lutheran belief. The royal father did not live to see the full result of his system of education. In 1632, when Christina was in her seventh year, he fell in the battle of Lutzen. The little princess was immediately presented by Chancellor Oxenstiern to the States as the rightful heir to the throne, and acknowledged as such. "Behold!" cried one of the deputies, pointing to the child, "the very features of the great Gustavus! Seat her on the throne, and at once proclaim her *king!*"

The seven-years-old sovereign bore the weight of royalty with precocious dignity and self-possession. Seated on a silver throne and surrounded by glittering pomp, she was about to receive some ambassadors from Muscovy; Chancellor Oxenstiern and others were endeavoring to prepare her for the interview. "Why," she exclaimed, probably astonished by the mere idea, "why should I be frightened by men with long beards? You also have long beards, and am I afraid or timid before you?" This self-confident question silenced her mentors.

On Christina's eighteenth birthday, Oxenstiern's term of regency expired. She was her own mistress, and emphatically the mistress of her people. Her will was law, and although rather despotic, her government was wise and efficient, as her popularity with the masses of the people attested. She issued sumptuary decrees forbidding the Swedish ladies to wear laces or colored ribbons; she prohibited feasts at social gatherings, on the plea that people sometimes drank to excess at such meetings, and, although at her coronation, fountains of red and white wine flowed, she was rigidly temperate. She prohibited gaming, and funerals costing more than about twenty-five dollars.

Having been, during her girlhood, accustomed principally to the society of men, she had imbibed a profound contempt for women, and acquired rough and coarse manners. Though extremely careless of her dress, her appearance was not unprepossessing. She had a profusion of brown hair, fine hazel eyes, and regular teeth. Her nose was Roman, and in the use of her tongue she was not sparing. She took the English Queen Elizabeth for her model. She swore frequently: but that is not remarkable when it is considered that more than a hundred years later a woman was known as a person of quality by her horrible swearing! Nowadays women never swear; but men certainly do a double amount of swearing. Christina was very energetic and restless. In spite of her lavish extravagance, she was favored by the people. Even the puritanical Whitelock, Cromwell's ambassador, declared that the court gayeties were conducted "genteelly and without the least offence or scandal." He was himself induced to take part in them.

The nation implored her to marry, that the throne might have an heir. She refused, saying that "marriage was an act that required more courage than to fight a battle"—perhaps the kings, electors, dukes, and margraves, who came forward as suitors, were of the same mind, in this instance, but the Swedish crown was worth some risk. Wishing to satisfy the nation, she appointed Charles Gustavus, her cousin, to succeed her.

Christina's temperament was active and restless. She became weary of the gilded slavery of court-life, and she declared her intention to abdicate in favor of the Crown Prince Charles Gustavus. This resolution has puzzled her biographers, and they ascribe it to various reasons. She had become a Catholic, and no Catholic could, by a law of Sweden, wear the crown; but this objection could have been without much difficulty set aside by a sovereign of Christina's temper and popularity. She had failed to keep her promises to relieve the commoners by not alienating the crown lands from the nobles, to whom she had granted them. But the truth probably was that Christina longed for leisure and independence—for freedom from the petty restraints and bleak climate of her home in the North. The act of abdication took place on the 6th of June, 1654, in the presence of the Assembly of States. The remonstrances addressed to her were numerous, of which the speech of the Marshal of the Boors, as copied by Whitelock, was full of sense and rude eloquence. "Continue in your gears, good madam," said this countryman, "and be the fore-horse as long as you live, and we will do the best we can to bear your burden. As long as you live we are unwilling to part with you, and therefore I pray you, madam, do not part with us."

She left Stockholm, taking with her a large amount of gold, silver and jewels. She halted at Hamburg, and scandalized the ultra-pious inhabitants of that city by lodging in the house of a Jewish banker. On the other hand, a minister preached a sermon, comparing her to the Queen of Sheba. As a reward, Christina sent him a gold chain; but the edifying effect of this gift was somewhat impaired when the highly-decorated book, which the queen had read during the service, was found to be a Virgil!

At Brussels she made a public profession of the Catholic faith. Doubts have been cast upon the sincerity of her conversion, but the evidence of her letters proves that she changed from conviction—having already passed from Lutheranism to skepticism. "The greatest scandal she could afflict us with," the Pope is said to have remarked, when the news reached him, "unless the idea of writing a book in defence of the faith should unhappily seize her."

She proceeded to France, and took up her residence in the palace of Fontainbleau. While there, Count Monaldeschi, her chamberlain, was killed by her order. Romance says that he was her lover, and that she punished him for having shown her letters to another lady; but this assertion has no foundation in fact. Monaldeschi, however, was stabbed by her guards almost in her presence, with but little warning, and his cries for mercy must have penetrated to her chamber. A mystery overhangs the affair. It is believed that he suffered for a political crime, and his death has been viewed by some, among whom was the philosopher Leibnitz, as an execution rather than a murder.

She went from France to Rome, and spent her leisure in the study of science and literature, at times mingling in politics. She died April 19, 1689, aged sixty-three. She was neither a bloodthirsty monster nor an immaculate saint, but a proud, wayward woman, who, though crownless, could never forget that she was the daughter of a king.

A MAN IN THE KITCHEN.

BY DAISY BURNS.

"Oh, girls," said a young lady, "such a sight I have seen!"

"Do tell us," exclaimed two others.

"Well, you know I went over to see Mrs. Bennett to-day."

"Yes."

"And she was sick. Now tell me who do you suppose cooked dinner? You know Mollie her cook has gone on a visit. Now guess who?"

"A hired girl, I suppose," said one.

"Or maybe you did," said the other.

"Bah, if no one ever gets a dinner till I cook it they will hunger indeed. No, you are both wrong—but let me tell you about it. I went to draw Mrs. Bennett a fresh drink of water and stepped in the kitchen, and there I saw Joe Bennett with his sleeves rolled up and his mother's great big cook's apron on, and he was making bread."

"Oh!" exclaimed young lady number two, "didn't he run and hide when he saw you?"

"Why, no, bless you—he only laughed and asked me if I had come to help him get dinner. Then went on rolling out the biscuits, and, girls, they looked really nice."

"Hurrah for Joe Bennett," said young lady number three. "I'm a Bennettite from this on," waving her hat, "and if Joe ever wants any one to help him, here's one he can get."

"He even made the coffee and fried the meat," said the first speaker.

"But the idea," said silly No. 2, "of a man in the kitchen."

"And why shouldn't a man be in the kitchen in such a case," said good No. 3. "I tell you, girls, if I had a husband, and I was to get sick, and he not to get my dinner—if no one else could be had—I'd never cook him another meal, that I wouldn't."

Hurrah for No. 3. No. 1 and No. 2 laughed, and thought No. 3 a very singular girl.

And indeed I am like No. 3. I love to see a man not ashamed to do a woman's work, if necessary. When the wife is sick, don't you know it does her heart good to see her husband strive to help her? To be sure men always make a botch of it, but 'tis good to know they have the will. No doubt some young man who may chance to see this, will throw up his hands in horror. "Catch me in the kitchen!" I hear him say.

Yes, sir, if you were *my* son, I'd catch you in there and keep you there till you could make as good bread as Joe Bennett. I know a young man who is a great beau among the ladies, and that young man can make better bread at this moment than half of us women can. I know it is our place to do this, and we always do it when we can—yes, for *I'd* as lief have an honorificabilitudinitatibus about me in a kitchen as *some* men. Talk to me about gossiping old women, &c., but if a man can't ask more questions when we are busy, and have more news to tell than any dozen women I ever saw, then I'll give it up. When a man comes into the kitchen pretty much as a cow would enter a parlor, or when he comes poking "how his mother did" at us, we had much rather dispense with his company; but when these real nice ones, like my dear good father, come in, who make the fire for us, grind the coffee, get wood and water, and do all these little things a man can do so well if he chooses, then we think so much more of them, and to these we always give a hearty welcome.

Woman.

The higher and more perfect the training a woman has received in all womanly essentials, the better a wife and mother she is prepared to become. She will not want for suitors who is worthy of them. Men are not all blinded by glare and glitter, by long ringlets of false hair, by mammoth panniers, artificial instepe, unnatural complexions, and that long languish of the eyelashes due to deceptive arts—not even when the soft rustle of silk is thrown over all this, and is softened by draperies of real lace, and embellished with the gleam of costly jewels. Most of them carry, deep in their hearts, a love of home and real womanhood. Now it is the business of all true women to call out this feeling in men; their doing so is necessary for the life of society, for the prosperity of the world. "Men are what women make them," it has been said. Well, before women can call forth any good in men, they must themselves be good and pure and true to every law of health, mental and physical.

☞ Keep your difficulties to yourself, and let people imagine that you are in expectation of good fortune.

OUR "BELLE MARIE."

Close by the window sitting to-night,
Wavy brown hair brushed back from her brow,
Dreamily thoughtful in the moonlight,
Smiling brightly is Belle Marie now.
A china vase, a bouquet at her feet—
She unconsciously moves, and—ah, well!
Broken past mending, yes, but how sweet
Is the fragrance from flowers crushed as it fell.
Tolle est la vie! tolle est la vie!
Just like the rest of them, Belle Marie!

Through the pale moonlight, softly a prayer
Comes from beyond the gray tinted cloud;
Gently it floats along on the air,
Till at last in her ear it whispers aloud:
"Pray God she may be all that she seems,
For I am weary and long for rest."
The echo steals from the land of dreams,
Murmuring sweetly, "He loves me best."
Tolle est la vie! tolle est la vie!
Dangerous dream-land for Belle Marie.

Nearer and nearer the wavy light
Bears the burden of weeping and woe;
Tempting her faith with a promise bright,
"Tell me, is he in earnest or no?"
Still nearer it comes—a weary sigh,
And 'tis met with a wearier moan.
The smarting tears of a man passed by.
While a girl only sat there alone.
Tolle est la vie! tolle est la vie!
Who pays the penalty? Belle Marie.

She starts. Ah, yes It was but a dream;
She laughs to think she looked on the floor,
Where only a tiny stray moonbeam
Had crept to her feet and—nothing more.
She smiles, and then shivers at the thought;
The moonlight is too cold for prayer.
The pretty vision was fancy wrought,
She need not weep over broken ware.
Tolle est la vie! tolle est la vie!
Just like the rest of them, Belle Marie!

THE HEIR OF GLENDALE;

OR, THE

Jewel with the Serpent Setting.

BY FRANK CARROLL,

AUTHOR OF "JOHN PASSMORE'S PLOT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

CELL LIFE IN MOYAMENSING.

Prison life was extremely onerous to Robert Merivale. He had lived an active life, had considered sunlight and fresh air two of the great essentials to a happy and healthful existence, and was of an impatient temperament that could ilily bear enforced confinement.

Life in a cell, therefore, told severely upon him. He grew sombre and melancholy, and sunk into a state of depression from which the frequent visits of his sister and friends but temporarily aroused him.

The dark outlook before him was one main cause of this gloomy condition. Circumstances seemed to array themselves with such force against him, with such few and insufficient facts in his favor, that he began to look upon a trial as synonymous with conviction.

His friends had nothing to offer of a cheering character, other than words without facts, and hopes the offspring of their own wishes. The research of the police had, so far as he was made aware, produced no result strongly in his favor. He knew of Mr. Wayland's visit to his room, and of his discovery that the cabinet seemed to have been torn open by force, that the mud upon his boots and their dimensions proved that he had been upon the river bank upon the night of the murder, and that there was proof of a boat and of another person having been present.

There was also the fact ascertained by the detective that the shirt he was said to have worn differed in texture from the threads which had been found upon the breastpin, and had not been torn as the one must have been from which the ornament had been forcibly wrenched.

These were points greatly in his favor, but they failed to have any encouraging influence upon his mind. He told himself that the fact of the cabinet being forced open, without other proof of a burglarious entry, might be imputed to accident. It could not be considered intention on his part, for it was discovered to be broken by his sister on their entering the room after his return from Glendale, and he could have had no object in previously wrenching it open. The facts concerning the presence of the fiddler in the neighborhood were in themselves of no value.

The facts discovered at the river shore corroborated his story, but did not prove it. It might be claimed that he had been accompanied by a confederate. The improbability of such a confederate approaching in a boat; of his, after spending hours in the vicinity, descending into this boat, leaving it to commit a murder, and then remaining in the grounds, while the boat and its occupant went off without him, did not sufficiently strike him. His mind was too strongly occupied by another point, the strange fact that the prow of the boat was carved into a snake's head, closely resembling that of the breastpin. This remarkable coincidence, as he viewed it, would surely be looked upon by the jury in another light than that of coincidence. It would be held as positive proof of connection between himself and the boatman.

The point concerning the shirt seemed to him the one most decidedly in his favor. But what was this alone to offset the positive proofs against him? There was nothing to show that he had not discovered the injury to his apparel, and changed it before returning home, destroying the evidence against him.

He thus looked determinedly upon the dark side of every fact exhumed by the officers in his favor. The shock of dread and astonishment he had received, on learning that his breastpin had been found clasped in the dead man's hand, yet bore with a depressing weight upon his mind, and prevented his appreciating the real strength of the facts in his favor.

His counsel was not blind to the growing force of his case, and tried to impress his client with a portion of his own hopefulness. But the latter looked upon this as simply a phase of the doctor's desire to cheer his patient. His opinion, besides, depended too much upon possible contingencies, and hopes of new corroborating points being discovered, to influence a man who doubted the honesty and ability of the whole set of detective officers.

"Everything depends upon the finding of that fiddler, who, I am positive, was both the thief and the murderer. But how is he to be found? I doubt if there has been any effort made to discover him. And if there was it would be done so bunglingly as merely to put him on his guard."

"You have too poor an opinion of our officers, Mr. Merivale," replied the lawyer. "They are very well acquainted with the whole thieving fraternity, and know just where to lay their hands on any individual of the tribe whenever they wish to."

"And how often do they wish to? If they were very anxious this way more thieves would be captured and more robberies explained. They have the wisdom of owls, and sit blinking at the community of law-breakers, and waiting till the pecuniary offer is large enough to pay them for laying their hands on the shoulder of one of their friends. I tell you, sir, an utter venality governs the whole crew. If I had a few thousands to offer for this fellow he would be in the hands of justice to-morrow. But while only a man's life is at stake they are not going to disturb themselves, and interfere with the comfort of their usual associates."

"You are bitter and unjust, Mr. Merivale. I have reason to know that you are mistaken in your estimate of the detective corps. I admit that what you have said may apply to some members of this force, but there are others as honest and capable in their profession as any men in the community. I have every faith in the two men who have your case in hand. Consider, besides, what they have to gain by success. Money is not the only moving principle of men's minds. There is such a force as ambition. There is acknowledged to be an undeveloped mystery surrounding this murder, and reputation awaits the man who unfolds it. Our police force is not without its *esprit de corps*, and is ready to do more for fame than for money. I fully believe that every possible effort will be made in your behalf, and that important favorable evidence will be discovered."

"You, a criminal lawyer, and with faith yet in thief-takers!" exclaimed Merivale, sarcastically. "I do not share your confidence, sir. I have seen something, and heard too much, about their system of operations to have a shade of trust in the whole fraternity. Oh! that I was out of this miserable cell, and free to work for myself! I make no professions of what I can do, but I believe in myself much more fully than I do in the tribe of detectives, and if this fugitive escaped me he would be a shrewder man than I take him to be."

"You have self-confidence," said the lawyer, calmly. "But confidence is not experience, and you might find that you were largely reckoning without your host. You had better content yourself with the assurance that your case is in the hands of experienced men, fully competent to do all that can be done."

"I have no such assurance," he replied, decidedly. "And you are mistaken about my experience. I have made it my business to see much of the low life of this city. I am pretty thoroughly acquainted with the haunts of the criminal classes. I know their modes of thought, and their habits of life, and have practised private theatricals till I have become an adept at disguise. Am I not then somewhat fitted for such a task?"

"You may be, in that case. But you had better dismiss all such thoughts from your mind. You will have no opportunity of putting your theories into practice."

"Is there no chance of my being admitted to bail?"

"Not the shadow of a chance."

"My case looks hopeless to me, sir, despite your assurances. Let but the chance occur, and I will help myself to that liberty of which the law has unjustly deprived me, and become my own detective officer. I do not fear to stand trial, if I have but a fair chance to defend myself."

"Do not solace yourself with any hope of escape," replied the lawyer. "You will have to depend on others, and I will promise to do my utmost to keep these others up to the level of their duties."

"Thank you, sir," replied the prisoner. "I wish I could have your confidence. But I cannot. These close walls oppress my mind with a gloom which I cannot throw off."

"I hope to bring you tidings soon that will help to dispel your gloom," the other cheeringly remarked.

Their further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of an officer of the prison. There was a lady present, he said, very anxious to see Mr. Merivale.

The lawyer at once took his leave, yielding to the principle of gallantry, *place aux dames*.

The rule of our county prison is that visitors shall speak to prisoners through the grating of their cell doors. But this rule is not rigidly enforced in cases similar to the present, and most of those calling to see Mr. Merivale were freely admitted within his cell, the door not even being locked upon them, the turnkey being well aware that there was no possibility of the prisoner leaving his cell unseen while he remained in the corridor, or of passing the outer prison door without undergoing inspection from the sharp eyes of the door-keeper.

The door was then opened sufficiently for the admission of a veiled lady, and partly closed upon them, the turnkey taking his usual seat at the end of the corridor.

The prisoner looked with an interest, that rapidly became joy, upon the form of his new visitor. A gladness which had not visited his face since first he had entered this gloomy apartment, beamed upon his countenance, as the lady threw back her veil and revealed the features of her for love of whom he had lost his liberty, and would willingly have given his life.

He had not seen or heard from her since their parting on the morning of his arrest, and it had not been the least of his sources of melancholy that he could not drive from his mind the dread that she might have been influenced by the dark appearances against him, or might have shrunk from the social ban that rests upon the accused almost equally with the condemned.

He told himself again and again that this latter idea did her injustice. That she was too true-souled, and loved him too earnestly, to permit her mind to be affected by prejudice or the fear of social ostracism. But, despite himself, her absence and silence weighed upon his mind, and produced doubts there which he could not avoid entertaining.

This sudden apparition in his prison-cell was, then, like a messenger from Heaven, sent to shed light upon his dark path and bring him strength to bear the destiny that weighed upon him.

With a glad cry, he clasped her in his arms, and impriated warm kisses upon her pallid face. A flush of joy kindled her features for the moment, as she yielded to his close embrace, but it was like sunlight upon snow, lighting up a ghastly pallor.

She had plainly suffered much in his misfortunes, but it was mostly a sudden revulsion of feeling at meeting him in such a place that had driven the color from her lips and cheeks, and left her trembling and pallid.

"My darling!" he cried, still clasping her in his arms, "this is indeed a happy moment. I have longed for you, prayed for you, and my heart is full of joy to find that you have not allowed misfortune to affect your feelings for me."

"I know you are innocent, Robert," she softly replied. "Knowing this I would despise myself could I let a thought of such a nature cross my mind."

"I might have known that," he answered. "But in this close, monotonous cell, and without sight or word of you, I could not keep my mind from brooding over fears and doubts. My strong wish for you has brought you at last, for you must have felt it, wherever you were."

"I am not quite sure whether it reached me or not," she replied, smiling. "You have not been out of my thoughts, that I can promise you. But, Robert, the turnkey has given me but a few minutes, and we must make the most of them. I have not heard, for a week past, one word concerning you, and I am burning with anxiety to learn what has been discovered, what your hopes are."

"Dear Marie," he said, "your love is the one great hope of my life. I lean on it involuntarily more than all the evidence that can be adduced. While you keep your faith in me I do not fear that fortune will quite desert me."

"Now, Robert," she replied, "I want a more direct answer. You know you are dealing in fantasy. Oh, my love!" she cried, a sense of fears suddenly affecting her voice. "You do not know how I have suffered, and longed, and prayed for you! Tell me, tell me, is there any danger of this dreadful accusation being sustained! Can such injustice be done? Can Heaven so desert the innocent?"

"I hope for the best, Marie," he gravely replied, leading her to a chair. "We have not yet succeeded in obtaining the evidence that we are in search of; but it is probable that we will gain it. There is only one thing wanting to clear me fully in the eyes of the world."

"Tell me all about it," she said, the pallor deepening on her face, while she clung to his hand with the clasp of one drowning. "You must have learned something. Such horrible injustice cannot be sustained. The murderer must have left some trace of his presence."

"He has. But it is, so far, very faint and illusory. A few days, however, may bring forth the clearest proof in my favor."

He proceeded to tell her what had been learned, of which the reader is already aware.

His recital cheered her more than it had done him. She recognized the full force of all these counterpoints of evidence, and a feeling of hope rose in her mind where before all had been doubt.

She spoke cheeringly to him, and strove, not without success, to lift him from the depression into which it was evident that he had fallen.

"And now about yourself, Marie," he asked. "You have not said one word about yourself."

"I am living too quietly to have anything to say. Of course, I have left Glendale since Henry Ogden took possession, and am residing with my friend, Mrs. Hamilton, who lives but a short distance from my old home."

"And about Glendale. How is this new proprietor acting?"

"Very well so far as his treatment of the servants is concerned, and he is said to be devoting himself closely to the management of the estate, and to have apparently cut loose from his past associations."

"And what more? I know from your tone that you have more to tell about him. Is there not another side of the picture not quite so rosy."

"Yes," she said, "my experience of him has not been of the most pleasant character."

"What has he done?" he hastily asked. "Has he presumed to treat you with any indignity?"

"The indignity of his professed love," she replied, tears rising to her eyes. "He has called on me, persecuted me, with a suit which I abhor; forced his attentions upon me when he might see that his very presence is a constant pain to me!"

"Oh, that I was free from the prison!" he cried, in fierce accents. "He would not persecute you long, my poor, dear Marie."

"I would that you were, with all my soul," she earnestly answered. "Not that I dread this man. He has annoyed me to some extent, I admit. But I am able to bear a little annoyance, and have given him plainly to understand that his attentions are distasteful."

"You do right. From all I have heard of him he is anything but a creditable acquaintance."

"It is not that alone," she replied, in a grave tone. "I cannot say but that he has been polite and gentlemanly with me. Yet I cannot help an involuntary repulsion in his presence. And this feeling has given me thoughts, which, perhaps, I do wrong to entertain."

"Thoughts of what nature?"

"Suspicions rather, I have no reason other than that I have given, yet my mind turns strongly to the idea that he is in some way connected with this murder."

"What do you say?" he cried, startled. "Can it be possible? The detectives appear to suspect him. I thought it was simply from his relationship to Mr. Ogden, and the fact of his being the probable heir."

"And is not that a reason? May he not have feared disinheritance on account of his actions, and have sought to destroy the will? May he not have been detected by his uncle in this effort, and have murdered him in consequence?"

"But he was not disinherited."

"How do you know that? I should take the contrary from the reading of the fragment of the will."

"There was indeed a sort of provisional disinheritance," he replied. "There may be something in this idea, although I had driven it from my mind as unfounded."

"What first made me suspicious was his early arrival at Glendale that morning, and his very weak reason for it."

"That is worth thinking of, Marie. You may have done me the highest service by the idea."

"It is worth acting on," she replied. "That is why I have not decidedly repelled his advances."

"Why? I do not understand you."

"There is a mystery which I want to reach. I will be nearer it as his friend than as his enemy. He may make revelations fatal to himself in a moment of confidence. It is for this alone that I have suffered his visits, despite my repulsion."

"You must not, you shall not, martyr your happiness in this way! I will not accept a service so painful to you. You are exposing yourself to unpleasant conditions, to insult perhaps. You shall not do it. Leave this business to the officers. I cannot bear the idea of your acting in such a manner."

"There is something deceitful and discreditable in it, I admit. But is not half of society deceitful in its relations with the other half? I am but acting with your enemy as our fine ladies act with their friends. And think what is at stake! Your life; my happiness! I scarcely hope for any success, but consider this course of action my duty."

He still strove to dissuade her, but without effect. She was too firm in her intention to be shaken. After a few minutes' more conversation she left him, much the happier and more confident from this visit.

CHAPTER XII.

DUSKY SOL INTERVIEWED.

Henry Ogden's arrangement with the strolling fiddler had some mysterious object which lay buried in the depths of his own bosom. His profession of a friendly interest in the accused was certainly not the real motive. He scarcely knew Robert Merivale, even by sight, and the peculiar kind of disinterested benevolence that would gratify itself by procuring the escape of a prisoner from the hands of justice, is not of the sort that is usually based upon the ground of philanthropy.

He continued to live a quiet life at Glendale, treating the servants with consideration, interesting himself in the management of the estate, and only leaving the place for an occasional run to the city. He had no visitors from the city, but received frequent calls from his neighbors, who appeared desirous of establishing friendly relations, and from the executors, who kept a keen eye on the management of the estate.

His principal return visits were to Mrs. Hamilton's, where a powerful attraction had arisen for him in the presence of his uncle's ward, Marie Dubois. As she had declared to her lover, some of his attentions were unpleasantly warm, and he had displayed the object of his visits more than once in a manner that she had met with a chilling repulse. Yet his visits continued. He was not the man to be easily escaped from; and after her first impulse of coldness she had grown more sociable, inspired by the purpose which she had divulged to her lover.

Yet Henry Ogden was not quite at his ease. The short, rustic individual, who had made himself so prominent about the house on the morning after the murder, was still about the neighborhood. Glendale seemed to possess a marked attraction for this man. He hung about the fences, chatting with the servants, and took every opportunity to penetrate to the house, where a certain sociable manner made him an agreeable visitor to the inmates of the kitchen and stable.

It was not the house particularly that seemed to attract him. The murder appeared to have made a most permanent impression on his mind. He was sure to bring this up in his conversations, and would ask the strangest and apparently most senseless questions on every possible feature of the matter.

He was also interested in the new proprietor, and deeply desirous to learn of his movements and what they all thought of his mode of management.

All this was asked, however, with such an appearance of rustic curiosity, their answers were listened to with such open-mouthed interest, and seemed of so little account, that no one dreamed of his being influenced by the shadow of a purpose.

But the frequent presence of this stranger did not escape the keen eye of the new master of Glendale. He recognized him at a glance as the person who had impudently accosted him on that eventful morning, and who had made himself very unpleasantly prominent.

His first impulse was to order him off the place, and forbid the servants having any intercourse with him. It was followed by a wish first to learn the object of his visits. This was easily gained from one of the servants with whom he had made himself chiefly familiar.

By a skilful cross-examination, Mr. Ogden learned the character of the rustic's conversation. In his shrewd mind the apparently disconnected questions, which had appeared so idle to the servant, assumed a coherence and a settled connection that seemed to betoken some hidden object.

The servant was directed to make inquiries about the neighborhood, and to find out who this person was, where he lived, and all about him. This he was to keep to himself, letting no one know who had directed him to make these inquiries.

Their result was that the man proved to be a stranger. No one knew him, nor had any one ever seen him before his appearance at Glendale after the murder.

He lived nowhere in that locality—all that was known about him being that he occasionally stopped for a meal or a night's lodging at the village inn.

There appeared something peculiar in all this, and instead of obeying his impulse to order the stranger off the premises, he contented himself with instructing the servant to keep him aware of these visits, and to closely repeat to him all the questions that might be asked.

Very little was gained by this plan, however. The visits of the stranger suddenly ceased immediately after these instructions had been given to the servant. Why, no one knew, but Mr. Ogden was not long in guessing what he conceived to be the true cause of this change. His idea—which he kept to himself—was that the apparent rustic was a person in disguise, possibly a detective officer, seeking evidence concerning the murder, and that he had at once discovered the object of the servant through some change in the manner of the latter person.

For some secret reason this matter made him uneasy. Had he known that his surmise was correct, and that he had been under surveillance by Hiram Long, one of the sharpest detectives on the force, his uneasiness would have been much deepened.

He had other reasons for this uneasiness. Henry Ogden was naturally suspicious and keen-eyed, and was not long in discovering that in his visits to the city his footsteps were tracked. This knowledge was by no means calculated to ease his mind. The fact that his wearing-apparel had been examined, also came to his knowledge, and formed another cause of his secret trouble.

Whatever other reasons he may have had for this feeling, the fact that he was under espionage was calculated to induce an uneasy feeling, even if he had no special cause for distrust.

To have his house invaded by detectives, his apparel examined, his steps dogged, was sufficient to produce a feeling of doubt and uncertainty, even in one who had no real cause for fear; particularly with the mystery of the murder remaining unsolved.

Whether in consequence of this, or from the fact that he came to the city with no special object, there was nothing gained by the individual who kept a distant but close eye upon him.

He spent his time in little details of business, in chatting with friends, in billiard and drinking saloons, and occasionally in gambling places. He appeared simply moved with the object of recreation, and to be indulging in some of his former pursuits.

Yet the espionage was not relaxed, and cautious as the spy continued to be, he failed to escape the keen observation of the man he was watching. On every visit to the city, his apparently careless glances would detect this man before he had reached a square from the depot.

Some secret means of communication must have been established with Glendale, thus to keep this scout in constant knowledge. Possibly the telegraph was in requisition to serve the purposes of the parties who were watching him.

He had impulses which counselled him to accost this man, and bring him to account for his persistent pursuit. But his nature rather impelled him to meet guile with guile, suspicion with apparent innocence, and thus give his enemies all the trouble possible, while affording them no adequate result for their pains.

There was another way of baffling them, if he had any secret communications to make. This was through the medium of the mail. It was, of course, impossible for the officers to determine whether the letters he sent and received were innocent or otherwise. He took good care that no one should learn the names of his correspondents, by posting his letters with his own hands at the city post-office, while all letters received were burned as soon as read.

This, however, may have been but the habitual caution of the man, and contained in itself no proof of any secret object.

The spy only once lost him during the several weeks through which this continued. He had entered a drinking saloon with a friend whom he had met in the street. The scout waited patiently for his usual reappearance, but in vain. Entering the saloon after a somewhat protracted vigil, he found that his bird had flown. He had gone out, as the barkeeper said, by a back door, into a small street that ran back of the saloon.

Meanwhile Henry Ogden was rapidly making his way from this locality, convincing himself as he went, by frequent wary glances, that he had indeed escaped his spy.

He rang the bell of a house in the upper part of the city, and on the door being opened inquired for Mr. Williams.

"Mr. Williams was in his room. Would he walk in?"

He did so, and proceeded to the room that was indicated to him, a small apartment in one of the upper stories of the boarding-house in which he was.

The occupant of this apartment started up on his entrance, and stood confronting him. He was a short, stout person, with a weather-beaten face, and dressed in a suit of genteel black in which he seemed not altogether at his ease. It was, in short, our old friend, Dusky Sol, who had donned the outer covering, but had not quite gained the demeanor or appearance of a gentleman.

His unwonted costume seemed to have made him nervously fearful of discovery. Hence his quick start at this abrupt invasion of his territory. In a moment, however, he recognized his visitor, and obsequiously brought him a chair, requesting him to "take a seat and sit down."

"Well, my man, how do you like playing gentleman by this time?" asked the visitor, as he coolly seated himself.

"Not a durned bit," was the reply. "It's agin the grain with me to put on such shop duds as these. I'd jest about as lief be inside a strait jacket, or chained down in Cherry Hill."

"You don't know how you are improved," the visitor rejoined. "Rags changed to broadcloth and a coat of dirt to a clean face, is a metamorphosis that has not often come across the current of your life."

"It's a what?" asked the tramp. "But it doesn't matter. I'm jest about tired of playing mouse, that's all. I've been on the road too long to like this four-wall business."

"You would rather try, then, the four walls of a prison."

"Now don't be putting it that way, gossip," replied Sol, shrugging his shoulders significantly. "I've been there in my time, and it don't fit in with my complexion no sort of way."

"Then you'll take a wise man's advice and keep quiet where you are."

"How about that work you talked about? Is it out out yet? I'm spiling for a job."

"That is what brought me here now. Did you get that letter I wrote you?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Here." He took a soiled letter from his pocket and handed it to his visitor.

The latter glanced at its contents, then twisted it up in his fingers, and took a cigar from his pocket.

"A match now, Sol."

The latter handed him one, watching his operations with a close and somewhat surly glance.

Lighting the match he kindled the crumpled letter, and leisurely proceeded to light his cigar with it. He then carelessly held it between his fingers until nearly consumed, and flung the fragment left into the spittoon.

"Have you been out any?" he asked, without making any reference to the destruction of the letter.

"Yes, I've been out after dark to the cigar shop. That's about all."

"Not to the whisky mill?"

"Not a step. I hain't touched, tasted, nor smelt. Don't buy Sol Brindle for a fool, cause you'll make a bad bargain. I know there's some blasted ugly business up, about that durned stone, and number one's my number. You don't catch this coon selling his pork for a glass of grog."

"Stick to that, my man. I will keep you up in funds as long as you obey orders. But the minute you break bounds the allowance stops."

"All right, gossip. And how about that job?"

"You must go down to Moyamensing prison and see Mr. Merivale at once. You remember my instructions?"

"Yes, every word of it.

"Recollect that my name is not to be broached on any conditions. You may tell him that a friend is working for him. The trial is fixed for the next term of court, which begins on Monday, so he may be brought up within a week."

"And you know that he will be ready to make tracks?"

"Yes. I am pretty well satisfied of that. The case is going dead against him, and I know him well enough to know that he will jump at the chance."

"And be caught agin in a day."

"No, you and I will see to that. He is a sharp fellow too, and will know how to make himself scarce."

"I've got to see my cronies, and lay the game out with them."

"Don't go till after dark and get in by back doors. The detectives are on the watch like hawks. You will have to do it all up in one trip, and let that be a sharp one."

"If they catch Dusky Sol napping, I give them leave to sell my head to a soap-boiler. I've been through the mill afore."

But we will not follow their conversation farther. It was continued for another hour, after which the visitor cautiously left the house, and rapidly made his way from the locality.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 24.)

☞ Difficulties are placed in our way that we may overcome them, and pass through conflicts to victories, and through victories to triumphs.

ON THE RIVER.

Golden-eyed lilies couched amid the reeds,
Their broad green leaves cases in the plain
Of silver waters, on whose limpid face
The falling lime-flowers dropped like summer rain;

The black-winged moorhen, crooning to her brood,
Her dusky nurslings through the rushes led;
Scarlet-flaned perch, like brilliant meteors, shot
Athwart the pebbles on the river bed;

And from the torrents of the rushing weir
Dashed forth the trout. The music of the mill
Spoke to two hearts upon that July day—
Speaks to one heart in sweetest memory still.

Drifting, our wherry 'neath the willows lay;
Dropped were my oars; her hand was clasped in mine,
O story old, O story ever new,
With much of earth, with much of the divine!

Still bloom the lilies in the sunshine clear,
Still turns the mill amid the dashing spray;
But 'neath the turf lies she who was my sun—
Passed is my dream—as pass all dreams—away!

ASHLEY H. BALDWIN.

THE MYSTERY OF TRENDLEDEEP MANOR.

BY PERCY B. ST. JOHN.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE OGRE.

Cecil was at a loss to comprehend the real meaning of the disappearance of the young girl, even with the clue that she had left her father, to follow in her mother's train. The opera-singer had acted with so much art and cunning as completely to mystify him.

Toward her, whether she proved to be the mother of her he loved or not, his feelings were none of the most friendly. She had used him in a most unjustifiable manner, and, having employed him to trace Maud, had stolen her away, without leaving a clue behind.

When, to his great surprise, he found his parents made no difficulty with regard to his leaving Brighton, his first thought was to follow up the Signorina della Rocca—as, doubtless, wherever she was, Maud would be found. He accordingly went to London, as we have already explained, which town he reached at night, too late to make a call even upon an actress, and went to his father's house. Unable to rest here, he strolled out, walked up the street inhabited by the actress, and looked with keen and longing eyes at the windows.

They were not very bright, only a faint glimmer being distinguishable on the ground floor.

But still his treasure, the loadstone that drew his heart so powerfully, might be in the house; and he found himself returning hour after hour, to the same spot—which, indeed, he did not quit until long past midnight.

Then he reluctantly strolled home and went to bed, not to sleep, however, until a very late hour.

Fortunately nature was kind to him, for he did not awake again until it was nearly time to call on the signorina.

Dressing himself with scrupulous care, Cecil Mordaunt, between twelve and one, drove to the well-known street off Piccadilly, to which he had been addressed.

He knocked impatiently at the door, which was opened by an English domestic, who politely required to know his business.

"I wish to see the Signorina della Rocca," said Cecil, handing his card to the servant.

"Not at home," was the quiet reply.

"But the signorina left Brighton the day before yesterday," urged Cecil, feeling very blank.

The man didn't know—couldn't say; but would he like to see the signor?

Though unable to tell how this would in any way forward his views, Cecil assented, and was ushered into a room, where stood the signor ready to go out.

He was a tall, cold-mannered man of much over sixty, very dignified and slightly theatrical in manner.

"I wish very much to see the signorina," said the young man. "I had the honor to be introduced at Brighton, and the signorina is able to give me particulars of a young lady in whom I am deeply interested."

The Italian replied, in a cold and stately way, that he knew nothing of the signorina's present movements. She was quite free from his superintendence. Her professional duties took her here, there and everywhere. For the present, he knew not her whereabouts, nor was he aware that she had left Brighton.

"If I write, will a letter be forwarded?" said Cecil, bewildered.

"Certainly, in due course," replied the signor, in a dignified way, that was a tacit reproach to the other's persistence.

And Cecil had nothing to do but to resign himself, and take his departure.

This he did with a very bad grace, and left the house in a state of mind more easily imagined than described. He returned home, however, and, seating himself at a desk, wrote an earnest and passionate letter to the actress, in which he begged her to let him see Maud again, if even it were only one moment in her presence.

But to this letter no answer came for several days. Then a brief epistle was placed in his hand.

"Forget the girl you knew as Maud Merton. I have changed my mind. She is not for you. No scion of the house of Mordaunt shall ever wed my child—that is impossible. I trust in your honor to keep your promise, and betray my handiwork to no one. You made me a vow which, as a gentleman, I hope and trust you will keep. I did promise otherwise in the first gush of gratitude; but now that I am cool and collected, the remembrance of my wrongs compels me to spurn all of your name and race.

"LUCILLA."

Now, this was too bad. He, Cecil Mordaunt, had been the instrument by whose means she had found her daughter, and he was peremptorily excluded from her presence, while, by the terms of his solemn promise, he was never, under any circumstances, to betray the actress to the girl's father.

Under these circumstances what was Cecil Mordaunt to do?

There was no course but patience. All he could do was to wait. True, the signorina had deceived him; but then she was Maud's mother.

He went to the Italian Opera, and, keeping himself in the background, scanned the whole house; but, though he saw the signor, no glimpse could he catch of either the signorina or her child. He went behind the scenes, where he had the entry, but no trace could he discover there.

The signorina was announced to appear in a few days, but she did not even attend rehearsals. Besides, if he saw her, of what avail, after her peremptory letter.

To drown his disappointment and grief, Cecil rejoined his own set, amongst whom once more shone Captain Walter Arundell, to whom, however, he spoke not of the one thought nearest his heart.

Maud was to him a sacred mystery which he could not unveil to others.

To avoid the subject, he forced himself to appear as merry and happy as possible, though his chief dissipation was the opera, of which his mother was peculiarly fond.

One evening he stood amid a group composed of Arundell and others. The house was full, and in her accustomed box sat his mother and one or two friends. His father was absent.

After a recognition of his mother, Cecil looked listlessly round the house. Suddenly his eyes fixed themselves, with a stare of surprise and wonder, on one particular box.

It was a large and costly one, and was occupied at that moment by a man of middle age—pale, elegantly-dressed, and, to all appearance, absorbed in the action of the opera.

The young man rubbed his eyes, looked again, and then whispered to Captain Arundell.

"Who is that?" he said, indicating the person he wished to arrive at information about.

"Oh, the ogre—the vampire they call him. Well, that is your cousin, Hubert Treherne Mordaunt."

"But do you see no likeness?"

"No. What likeness?"

"As certain as I am here, that is Mr. Meriton, the father of Maud," murmured Cecil.

"By Jove, it is a most astonishing likeness; but I never heard that Mr. Mordaunt had any children. He is regarded as a crusty old bachelor, who has lived so long out of England as to be quite a Goth."

"Was he ever married?" asked Cecil.

"Oh, yes—to his cousin, Miss Lucy Mordaunt; but they made a terrible mess of it. She ran away, and he went cranky. It was never rightly explained, as she disappeared, and he shut himself up, became a misanthrope, and would associate with no one."

"A strange story," said Cecil, musing.

He said no more, but left his companion, and went higher up in the house, where he could get a good look at the mysterious stranger. When he came to look through a glass, he was still more persuaded that he was correct in his surmise.

But how could he reconcile this cool demeanor in public with what he had seen of his deep feeling of affection for his child? Was it all hypocrisy, and was the signorina then justified in stealing away her daughter?

He stood with his back to a pillar, watching him, and then, making a sudden resolve, went round to that side of the house.

He strolled past the box. It opened—the occupant came out, and peered round from side to side. He was faultlessly dressed, but his manner was unpleasant—it was a mixture of shyness and impertinence.

Cecil, on the mere strength of their Teddington introduction, bowed.

The occupant of the box lifted his eyeglass to his eyes, stared with evident surprise, and passed on. It was incredible—so much coolness, such affectation of indifference and listlessness.

"Pardon me," said Cecil, unable in any way to overcome his emotion; "my name is Cecil Mordaunt. We have met before under different auspices. May I ask news of your daughter?"

Mr. Mordaunt, of Trendledeep, stood quite still. For a moment he appeared to be about to turn silently away, then by a strong effort he restrained himself.

"Mr Cecil Mordaunt, son of Sir Vincent—oh, yes—cousin—glad to see you! Daughter! Never had one."

"Really, Mr. Mordaunt, you need have no false delicacy with me. If you think proper to conceal your daughter under a feigned name, it is no business of mine."

"Pardon me, Mr. Cecil," said the other, with a grim smile that showed a formidable set of teeth, "but I cannot countenance this error longer. I have no daughter—never had one. Do me the favor to dine with me to-morrow—compliments to your father, and so on."

With which the bewildered young man exchanged cards with his cousin, and went away, more hopelessly puzzled than ever.

Next morning, at breakfast, he told his father of an accidental meeting with Hubert Mordaunt, who had asked him to dinner at his house.

"Ah!" said Sir Vincent, "that is strange, indeed. He has never spoken or looked at me since his marriage. This is no bad idea. You are his heir, after all, and so, I suppose, must pay him some sort of respect."

"No children! He was married, I believe?"

"But separated from his wife under most painful and mysterious circumstances before any family came. Some people think the separation drove him mad. Be careful with him—he is, at all events, an oddity, but in default of direct heirs, you are his successor. And now, good-morning—I must hurry out on business."

And so it was that Sir Vincent Mordaunt advised his son Cecil to pay his court to Hubert Treherne Mordaunt.

He himself was now suffering with a vengeance for the sins of his youth—suffering in the person, too, of this very son whom he so much loved.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A STRANGELY-ASSORTED PAIR.

The house inhabited by Hubert Mordaunt was small but elegant. It was what the advertising house-agents call a *bijou* residence.

His household and appurtenances were precisely what we have already seen at Brighton.

As no man in society had ever been asked within his doors, few could give any account of it. He never invited any one to see him. He was not much less popular for that.

Rich, possessed of large estates, his society was courted by many more than could obtain it. He accepted few invitations, though to be seen at most of the gay festivals of the season.

Cecil Mordaunt heard strange stories enough of him even in the brief interval which separated him from the hour when he was to dine in his company. A formal invitation came to him in the course of the day, fixing the hour at seven.

Cecil dressed himself with unusual care. This man, whoever he might be—relative, friend, or enemy—appeared to him some one to be respected if not feared. He had not given up the idea that, after all, he was the father of his beloved.

At seven, resolved to believe that punctuality is the politeness of kings, and not that he himself was impatient, the young man was at the other's door. It opened ere he knocked.

The dark-visaged domestic received him in respectful silence, and ushered him into a small but superbly-furnished apartment; which appeared, however, to be the sanctum rather of some eastern prince than of an English gentleman. Everything bore the mark of eccentricity.

In another moment the host strode into the room, waved Cecil to a seat, and himself took one opposite.

"You consulted your father before you came?" he asked, in tones that were strangely harsh.

"Yes."

"And did he not warn you against me?"

"On the contrary, he wished me, by all means, to cultivate your acquaintance."

"Why?" asked the other, dreamily.

"Because," said Cecil, laughing at his own frankness, "in default of any direct issue, I am your legal heir."

Hubert Mordaunt stared at him with open mouth, put his hand to his head, and seemed to reflect deeply.

"True, true; I never thought of that," he said, grimly. "So I suppose you are. We must think more about it."

Dinner was announced. It was superb in show, and excellent in substance. The host was a finished *gourmet*, and his taste in wines was exquisite.

No one attended save the deaf and dumb page; but even under these circumstances Hubert Mordaunt did not talk of anything that did not concern the dinner.

Though every now and then giving way to dreamy abstraction, he played the host pretty tolerably.

At the end of the dinner an exquisite dessert was laid upon the table, with cigars and various *liqueurs* in addition to the wines, and then the attendant was waved away.

The host filled a bumper, drained it, and, leaving the young man to help himself, lighted a cigar, and soon a cloud of smoke arched round his head.

"May I ask, young man," he said, at last, "what made you, last night, ask me after my daughter?"

"I pray you, sir, mock me not! Are you not he in whose house I was received, after my accident at Teddington?"

"I never saw you before, to my knowledge; but if you will explain to me exactly what has led to this supposition on your part, I will aid you to the extent of my power."

Cecil sighed, not daring to answer as he felt inclined, for fear of irritating his host, and then began his tale.

He told it earnestly and fervently, though only as far as their meeting, and her sudden departure from Brighton. Of the Signorina della Rocca he said nothing as yet.

The other listened to him with deep and absorbing interest; every detail was greedily devoured.

"And this man," he said, with an intensity which seemed to leave no doubt of his sincerity, "was so like me that you really still could mistake us one for the other?"

"He appeared colder, more severe, more—" and the young man hesitated.

"More rational?" half sneered his host, who strove with iron determination to hide something very like terror.

"He was a man who either hated mankind for some great wrong that had been done him, or feared the discovery of some great crime," replied Cecil. "Now I have had time to study you more, I see the difference, and yet the likeness is marvellous. Except that he appeared older I should have taken him for your twin brother."

The other laughed discordantly.

"You do me too much honor to compare me to this—this madman or adventurer; but I should like to see him—yes, I am very curious to see him," he muttered.

At the same moment he rose, and took down a small miniature from the wall, where it hung with many others. He looked at it with concentrated ferocity that quite amazed the young man.

"Do you know that face?" he said, abruptly, placing it before the young man's eyes.

He almost shrieked. It was his Maud, only fuller, more queenly, though not more beautiful, with none of the winning softness that belonged to her to whom his heart was given. In his own mind he at once set it down as a portrait of her mother.

"Is that anything like the girl you speak of?" the other asked.

"She is younger, softer, and more lovely!" was the ardent youth's reply.

"It is well for you," said the older man; "for this one was a cruel and remorseless fiend. I will not deny that I knew her, but that is all I can say. I keep her portrait there that I may feast my eyes with hate. But this man who so resembles me—when saw you him last?"

"Ere I left Brighton," replied Cecil, thoughtfully. "I must search him out, I must find him, and yet she must be found first."

"You are young, you are hopeful, you are rich," said the host. "In your place I should avoid such beautiful demons. The less you have to do with them the better, and now let us talk of something else. As we have met together under peculiar circumstances, we may as well see more of one another, especially as you are destined to be my heir," he added, with a grim laugh.

Cecil bowed, scarcely knowing what answer to make to this slightly sarcastic remark.

"Come when you think proper, and come alone. If you see more of my double, let me know. Will you take coffee?"

Cecil declined. He was anxious to be away—alone with his own thoughts—and he wished the other adieu.

Hubert Treherne Mordaunt never offered his hand, never looked him full in the face, and his adieu, though formal, was hearty enough; but when Cecil had left, the expression of his face became demoniacal. This the young man knew nothing of.

The same grim domestic let him out. As he descended the steps of the house, a man in a cloak and broad-brimmed hat passed rapidly near him, peered into his face, and was gone ere he could recover from his astonishment. The same face, the same expression, the same gleam of the eyes. It was his host, most certainly, or his double. But before he could rouse himself to pursue, the other was out of sight.

The young man became now convinced that his relative was speaking the truth, and that there did wander on the face of the earth two men whose appearance was so similar that under every ordinary circumstance of life the one might be taken for the other.

But when he allowed this to be true, it only added to the great difficulty of his situation, and left him without any clue by which to unravel a mystery which became greater the more he sought to fathom it.

Under these circumstances it required the exercise of considerable patience for him to lay his plans for the discovery of Maud—an undertaking, however, from which he never flinched, believing in his heart of hearts that with time he must finally succeed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CAPTAIN HEARS NEWS.

The home of Captain Walter Arundell was one of those snug and cosey bachelor sets of chambers which are invested with such a charm to men who, having resided in India and on the Continent, are fond of their liberty and comfort, and their ease.

But a great deal of his time was spent at the house of John Haldane.

This gentleman, who, by a turn of the wheel of fortune, appeared to spring from a very questionable position to that of one of the *élite*, occupied a very excellent rank in the social scale. His life, however, was a very simple one, though all that wealth could procure appeared at his command.

His residence, in one of the most fashionable outskirts of London, was almost rural in its situation, being surrounded by trees, and standing by itself in its own grounds.

Here he resided, with the usual number of domestics, but with no companion save his only and beloved daughter, Eleanor.

Eleanor was now about six and twenty years of age, possessed of that rich Oriental beauty which is a compound of energy and languor, and of every natural charm that ever belonged to woman; but she was grave, reserved, and, except to her father, whom she idolized, cold and distant. It was difficult to tell whether or no she was possessed of any real natural feeling; but she showed very little. Her mind was, however, richly stored with the admirable result of study. She had read much, and had profited by so doing, her brain having sifted the somewhat incoherent mass, and refined it.

She was an admirable talker, and as such the captain cultivated her society.

They were very pleasant companions. He full of experience of life, able to tell of adventures by flood and field, and to speak of most of the courts of Europe from personal knowledge.

Eleanor was more ideal. After listening to his facts and practical views of life, she would plunge into reflections on poetry, painting, philosophy, far beyond the ken of the young soldier, to whom such matters were, at all events, but pleasant mysteries.

Life to him had been one long course of action. He had fought on many fields, had travelled, and gone through most of the trials and adventures incident to men of his age and profession; but, though well-educated and well-read, the last man in the world to be metaphysical or logical.

His conversation was of facts and realities, and not of dreams.

He was a man of actions, not words, and, as every man knew who knew anything of him, the soul of honor.

He was brave, he was a man to lean against, he was a man for a woman to be proud of. And Eleanor knew this well.

And hence it was that Eleanor loved him now, had loved him since he was a boy, and was doomed ever to love him until the latest hour of her life.

Nothing can be less conducive to this kind of affection on the part of a man than to be brought up with a young girl on such intimate terms as to cause him to regard the other as a sister.

So it was with Captain Walter Arundell. Ever since he had been taken from that school in Belgium, she had been his constant companion until he entered the army.

On every occasion when Mr. Haldane invited him to his house after he had commenced his military career, he had been treated by her as a sister, and now that she was a beautiful woman, with every charm of face, and feature, and manner, she was still to him the near and dear relative he had always known—no more.

That she was more distant and reserved mattered little to him, as he always got over that sort of thing in time, and with Eleanor this was easy.

He came to see her often, nearly every day; he walked in the grounds, he sat beside her piano, but never once did he care to recollect that this lively specimen of womankind had been for years destined to be his wife.

Balthazar—whom from habit we call John Haldane—was horribly disappointed, and, but for his daughter's earnest, almost abject, entreaties, would have let his feelings be known to his *protégé*.

But Eleanor implored him in such terms that he was compelled to yield.

"But, girl, all the dreams of my life are being upset by this obstinate boy!"

"How can this be, sir?"

"Since the hour when I took him from poverty and obscurity, to open to him a career of brightness and usefulness, my dream has been to see you two married, and married ere he discovers his true position."

"A fault, sir!"

"How?"

"Such plans never succeed. Perhaps he has suspected your wish."

"And flouted thee?" cried John Haldane, darkly.

"No, father."

"If I thought so, much as I love the boy, much as I have done for him, and wish to do, he should feel the full weight of my displeasure," said he, in return, speaking in a moody tone.

"My father, I have never made any secret to you of how firm and solemnly my affections are fixed upon him. It was a girlish dream, which, unfortunately, I allowed to swell into too much of a reality. When, at fourteen, I admired the fearless boy of sixteen, I little imagined what a foundation of sorrow and disappointment I was laying in store for myself—and yet not so, for whatever else be true, he is a noble specimen of his sex, and I will not regret that I have loved him."

"He never trifled with you, girl?"

"Never, father!"

"But he is heart-whole—loves no other. Do you not think that, perhaps, owing me much, aware of no other friend, under some obligations to me, he may, having no fortune or status of his own, fear to address you? A word from me would dissipate that thought," said John, in something of a jesuitical tone.

"Father, if that word be spoken, if ever you breathe a hint of what I once hoped, and you have ever wished, I will repulse him rudely, and return to my convent rather than accept him. Be patient—who knows? And time works wonders."

"Well, well, child! But now I must run away, for here comes the captain, and if I wait to see him I shall frown darkly and excite his suspicions."

And he hurried out, descended to his private apartments, and presently went forth from the house.

Captain Arundell, with one of his good-humored smiles, sauntered into the apartment, and asked his charming cousin, as he called her, to give him luncheon.

The girl, with a half-sickly smile, assented; and then the two began one of their usual conversations. The captain had always something to say, some new event of the hour to talk about; but then, provoking fellow! he hadn't read the last new poem, nor that extraordinary article in the —— review, nor heard of the new theory which, after making quite an earthquake in Germany, had oscillated on until it had shaken England.

But if they happened to fall upon any noble deed of heroism, if they had heard of any particularly brave act of life-boat or pilot men, then at once the joint sympathies were aroused, and any one could see how readily both souls ran in one channel.

Somehow the captain felt a better man, less artificial and false, after an interview with Eleanor Haldane.

When he retired she would sigh and shake her head, but without the least feeling of anger or annoyance against him, for how could a man force himself to love?

On the present occasion, when they parted, the captain went slowly to his chambers in Pall Mall, where he found that his man had allowed a person—a total stranger—to wait for him in his apartments.

The captain frowned. Such a proceeding was wholly against orders; but the thing was done, and, as it could not be avoided, he made no further remark.

The man was about sixty—a spare, thin figure, with a face wrinkled and full of knots, hair white and straight, and a general air of cunning and duplicity which could not be mistaken by the most superficial observer.

He rose from a chair, and bowed low to the master of the chambers.

"Captain Walter Arundell?" he said.

"That is my name. My time is short; but if you will be seated, I will attend you while I can."

"My business, sir, is important in the extreme, and if you cannot spare the time now, I will return at a future period."

"At all events, let me know its nature."

"Ah—hem—you will excuse me, but I must ask you first rather an impertinent question."

"Be careful, sir—a walk down-stairs at double-quick time is apt to be my treatment of impertinence."

"Captain Walter Arundell, the motive which brings me here must be my excuse for what may appear a startling question. Do you know anything of your father and mother?"

The gallant officer literally gasped for breath as he turned upon the other his pale and ghastly look.

"I presume, sir, you do not come to insult me?" he cried.

"No, sir; but, by the strangest means in the world, I have got a clue to the mystery of your birth. I know nothing positive as yet; but if you are willing to aid me, I dare say in a few days I can come at the whole truth."

"And this is your business, sir?" he continued, in a calmer tone.

"Yes, sir, it is; and I'd have you know that if you refuse my assistance you may remain in ignorance until your dying day."

"Sir, any information on this point I may require I can easily obtain from Mr. John Haldane, my guardian and friend."

"Try him, sir. Here is my address. It is my belief that you are the heir to extensive estates, with a title, which position is now usurped by another. I will give you a week to consider—will call again. Good morning, sir!"

And the captain was left alone ere he could make any reply.

Now, this was the one great weak point of the captain's character. He was intensely English in this. He had an excellent name and position, he had money at his disposal, he had a liberal and kind guardian, but he was wholly ignorant of his family.

John Haldane had always declined to give him any information on the point.

"It would serve no good purpose at present. Though you were born in wedlock, your father behaved like a scoundrel to your mother, and so you had better not know him. Some day, perhaps—yes, some day—"

But that day was far distant still, as the old man had resolved that the secret should never be revealed until Captain Walter Arundell was irrevocably the husband of his beloved daughter Eleanor—a contingency, at present, as far off as it had been several years before.

The captain was vexed beyond measure. That any one should canvass his origin was annoyance enough; but that any one should pretend to know more about his own affairs than he did himself was simply pure impertinence.

Still, he put up the card, and resolved, at all events, to be guided by circumstances in what he knew was the most important event in his existence."

Hitherto he and John Haldane had seldom spoken on the subject. He was by no means aware that John Haldane was mainly influenced by a feeling of intense and bitter hatred toward his father, and that the motive of his secrecy was one of a very painful character. He wished the fond parent to see his beloved son reach the *apogee* of joy in the good opinions of men, to see him betrothed to one suited to him, then to hurl him to the earth, a younger son—a cypher—a nobody—while his heir should be made known to him as the husband of the very woman's niece whom he had maltreated—the son-in-law of his enemy, John Balthazar Haldane.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MEETING.

Cecil Mordaunt, despite all his parents' efforts, despite the many distractions of a young man's life, when that young man is a Guardsman and the heir to a baronetcy, never for one moment allowed the image of Maud to vanish from his eyes.

He tried every place where one of her mother's profession was likely to reside, he besieged the opera in and out of season, he rode about Brompton and Chelsea like one demented, and yet no result came.

At last, wearied of riding, weary of himself, of everything, he went to Richmond one day, and took a boat in which to row up to Teddington. Something connected with their first meeting appeared to lead him that way.

The day was magnificent; the lazy wind hung amid the trees, but the tide was with him as he rowed under the banks, which are so lovely for some distance; so dull when Twickenham—with its high walls, black slums, and its sewers—comes into view.

Dashing past the town, however, he was presently rowing along the charming gardens, which soon indemnify us for the town; gardens which run to the river's edge, and the trees of which kiss the very waters.

The tide was pretty high, and the gardens, therefore, to be seen in all their beauty and loveliness.

Cecil moved slowly now he was alone and able to think with sorrow and regret of the few bright days—the only ones, he thought—of his existence which had so quickly faded away.

Suddenly he ran into the drooping and massive shade of an overhanging willow, the boughs of which dipped into the flowing waters.

He lifted his head to examine the situation, and pulled suddenly in shore.

As he did so he with difficulty restrained an exclamation of delight, of rapture, as he saw, seated not ten yards distant, Maud Meriton, apparently absorbed in reading, under an overhanging tree.

To tie his boat, to clamber the wall, to approach the fair object of his affections, was the act of a moment.

The young lady looked deeply hurt, and alarmed even, when she recognized the intruder.

"Go away—do go away—I must not speak to you!" she cried.

"Miss Meriton," he said, taking her hand and seating himself upon the seat beside her, "pray listen to me once more, for this mystery and reticence cannot last. There is nothing in my conduct to warrant such scorn on your part. I am a young man of good family, an only son, the heir of thousands, with every advantage that fortune can give me. I love you with all my heart and soul, and sue you in all honor and sincerity to be my wife: why, then, do you so cruelly repel me?"

Maud sighed, but made no reply. Still she sat quiet and listened.

"Oh, my darling, only tell me that personally you do not dislike me—say that I am not wholly indifferent to you."

She hung down her head as if afraid to trust her own voice.

"Speak, dearest! do not be too proud to make me happy, if you can."

"If—if—all were clear and friends agreeable," she whispered, "I say not but that I might prefer you to any one else."

"Might!"

"Well, do; but it is useless. My mother is at heart far more bitterly opposed to you than ever was my poor father."

"Why, they cannot tell you. Some absurd and cruel prejudice exists against my name and house, the nature of which I cannot fathom at all. Surely you do not join in this?"

"No; but we must obey our parents. They surely judge for our good?"

"Say not so. Is it for our good to force us into marriage with one repugnant, nay loathsome, to us? I do not believe in wholly opposing the wish of parents—I think it hard for a child to reject their counsel—but when it comes to wedding one selected for us, whom we know not, the very idea is horrible."

Maud shuddered at the very thought.

"But my mother has not done that. She only warns me against all of the race of Mordaunt, and invokes on me the bitterest fate to which woman can be consigned if I do not reject all of the name."

"But has she told you why, after once promising to aid my suit, she now so cruelly repels it?" he asked, fixing his eyes keenly on her.

"No."

"Maud, we are both very young; our parents, doubtless, have views with regard to us very different from what pleases or contents us. They may seek to marry us to others. I, for one, solemnly vow in the presence of Heaven to wed none but you; will you be as true to me?"

"Yes!" she cried, with sudden animation. "Cecil, I swear by every holy thing in life or nature never to wed any man, except it be you. Will that satisfy you? If so, go, and trust to better times."

"Heaven bless you!" he answered; "and, now, hearken to my words. Many a heart has been broken, many a life ruined and made void, by treachery, deceit and falsehood. Will you here, hand in hand, make me one solemn promise—that you will believe no reports, no assertions, that you will never consider yourself released from your promise, unless you see me with your own eyes, hear me with your own ears?"

"I promise," she replied.

"Do you often come here?" he asked, after some further conversation of too tender a character to be with propriety transferred to paper.

"Every day. My mother has many visitors," she replied, "and, as yet, she has introduced me to none. I do not like strangers."

Suddenly Cecil turned very white, his lips trembled, and, rising, he walked up and down the sward in a state of agitation difficult to be described.

"What ails you?" asked the young girl, considerably alarmed.

"My darling, I know not scarcely how to put my question; but you have no doubt that Mr. Meriton is your father?" he began.

"None whatever. A father is not to be mistaken," she cried, sadly.

"And a mother?"

"Can love err? Nothing that fancy ever brought to my imagination ever equalled what she shows to me—to touch me, to speak to me, to stroke my hair, is to her joy beyond measure."

"But—but—who, then, is the Signor della Rocca?" asked Cecil, looking confused and pained.

"I do not know. He treats mamma like his daughter, only he is rather harsh. He says that she is becoming quite unfit for her profession, and may as well give it up."

"And what answers your mamma?"

"That she cares not, for with this season she intends to quit it, and, retiring to Italy, spend the rest of her days in peaceful retirement."

Cecil heard this with satisfaction. He had no wish to connect himself with the daughter of one who was actually on the stage.

But it was the mystery with regard to the Signorina della Rocca that he could not make out.

Maud could not satisfy him. The signor was apparently the master of the house, but he took all his orders from the signorina, that was all she knew.

And now they must part. Her mother would soon be out in search of her, when the presence of Cecil would exasperate her beyond measure. She would, however, be there the next day at the same hour; and, satisfied with his unexpected discovery and victory, Cecil retired toward his boat.

He was not satisfied, however. To the young and ingenuous mystery is always repugnant, and to Cecil, who was of an open and loyal character, it was particularly so.

He little knew the terrible trials the signorina had gone through, and what had been her sad and painful experience of life.

The mystery became all the more peculiar and unfathomable when he took into account the extraordinary likeness of Hubert Treherne Mordaunt to her father.

"By the way, dearest," he said, as he stood on the summit of the steps leading to his boat, "should your mother be too hard upon the name of Mordaunt, ask her if you do not by right claim alliance yourself with that house. I have the strongest reasons for thinking so—and now farewell!"

And without another word he hurried away, leaving her considerably perplexed.

She could not delay, however, as her mother was seen advancing from the house.

Cecil disappeared up stream, and, crossing the river, returned to town.

The signorina joined her daughter, complimented her on her good looks, and asked her to join her in the house in order to repose before dinner, when she expected guests whom she wished to be agreeable to, whom she also wished Maud to know.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 47.)

Ever My Queen.

(CONCLUDED.)

BY PIERCE EGAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE FLOWER OF THE FLOCK," "VIOLET; OR, THE WONDER OF KINGSWOOD CHASE," "MARK JARRETT'S DAISY," ETC.

CHAPTER XLII.

It may be conceived that the explanation which Etheline gave to her mother concerning Lollie made her receive the poor young girl with the tenderest kindness, and that when Etheline made her next essay to set out for Hastingleigh Court, Lollie accompanied her.

The tenantry of Hastingleigh were not enlightened in reference to the circumstances which had brought back the family after so long an absence, and they were not permitted to make any demonstration, which they were desirous of doing on finding the great house once more inhabited after it had been so long closed. The paradox of the lady, whom they had mourned as dead and lying in her tomb, having returned to life, and employing herself in offices of quiet yet active benevolence, was left to them to solve as best they might; and as without explanation they could not solve it, they gave it up.

The cousins of Lydia Marchmont were not permitted to be disturbed—for the time being, at least; and soon, as these matters mostly do, the wonder and the talk, which at first promised to become rampant, subsided into silence.

Old Lister, having become a "Good-Templar," was reinstated in his place in the service of the marquis. He had obtained a divorce from his wife, and it was understood that, with a sum of money given to her, she had gone abroad, never to return.

It was even reported that General Cleveland Dysart had sold off the house, pictures, furniture, carriages, and property he had purchased since his return to England, and had gone to travel in a distant land; so all went peacefully at Hastingleigh Court.

Yet one evening, as the marchioness was returning alone from a visit of condolence to a poor old cottager, whose daughter had gone to London, had been ruined, and after leading a life of profligacy, had perished miserably, a shadow fell abruptly across her path.

She started back, for a man stepped before her, and she saw at a glance that it was Cleveland Dysart. She uttered a faint scream, and would have fled, but he prevented her by grasping her wrist.

"Unhand me," she cried, half frenzied, "or I will shriek for help. You know what must follow."

"I care not," he responded, guttarally. "Without you, life is hateful—it is a madness to me, for, wander where I may, your face and form hold their sway supreme over every other thought, wish and hope. I have abandoned all considerations but those which comprehend you as the object of my worship—the companion of my future. You must be mine! Your power over me will be supreme. You shall be my queen, as you have ever been—ever! But you shall be mine! Meet me an hour after sundown in the Hermit's Dell—you know the place—and there will this time be no dropped note to betray you. Fail not to come, for your husband's life, your daughter's fair reputation, depend on your keeping this appointment. My plans are all laid. So complete are my contrivances that to refuse my request—nay, command—will involve the utter destruction of those whom it may be you fondly love, and would preserve, even though it cost you some personal sacrifice to secure their safety and happiness. I release you now until the hour of meeting; but, ere you depart from me, remember this: you and yours are in my power to crush even as I grind this flower beneath my heel. I have cast all sentimentalities to the winds, and I am inexorable—merciless! Fail to obey me, therefore, at your peril—and theirs!"

He withdrew his hand, and he was gone, phantom-like. She fled with a clanging brain toward the house. She did not doubt his malignity, nor, unhappily, his power. Unfortunately, the marquis was in London, settling some affairs, and she could not consult him as she wished. What to do to save her husband and child she could not devise, for that this desperate man would, if able, keep his word, she felt only too sure.

In her agony of mind she wandered like one distracted from room to room, until at length, and by accident, she found herself in that same topmost apartment in a tower of the west wing of Hastingleigh Court where she sat when first introduced to the reader.

The sun was fast declining as then, and as she gazed from the window, her eyes involuntarily settled upon the gleaming waters of the river, and upon the Stepping-Stones. At the same moment she saw the form of a man crossing them. Half-way, he turned and looked, as it seemed, upward, direct at her window. She staggered back with a faint cry of horror. It was Cleveland. She knew his form only too well.

She sank upon her knees, buried her face in her hands, and prayed passionately for guidance and support from Heaven. She remembered the consequences of her grievous fault—all the circumstances which attended, succeeded it; and it seemed now as if the terrible struggle was to be renewed and fought over again. Her contending emotions were too much for her, and she presently, perhaps happily, lost all recollection for a time in a swoon.

When she awakened the night was of pitchy blackness, thunder was roaring in deafening bursts, blue lightning played luridly in the apartment, rain descended in torrents, and booming and mingling with the sounds of the tempest she heard the roar of the swollen river, and the lashing of the angry waters against the Stepping-Stones.

Shuddering, shivering, she fled from the room, and encountered Etheline and Lollie in search of her; but it was not until the morn had broken, and she had fallen into a gentle slumber, that Etheline felt a hope that her mind, which had evidently been wandering, had recovered its balance.

It was near midday when the Marquis of St Leonards returned to Hastingleigh Court. As his carriage was passing through the village, he observed a group of villagers moving together in that peculiar and solemn way which betokens that something sad has happened. He leaped from his carriage, and went up to the head of the procession to make inquiries, and one of his gamekeepers stepped forward and said, as he touched his hat:

"Dead body, my lord, and may it please you. Gentleman found drownded in the Earl's Pool. S'pose he got drownded in the storm last night, crossing the Stepping-Stones."

"Let me see if I know him," exclaimed

the marquis, with an expression of pity on his countenance.

The men who were bearing the body set it down, and removed the heavy wet cloth from the ghastly pale face of the dead man. The marquis gazed at the open, staring eyes, the fallen jaw, and the distorted features of the dead man, and a strange cry burst from his lips.

It was Cleveland Dysart!

"Drowned—dead, may it please you, my lord!"

The words rang with a strange, canterizing pain through the brain of the marquis, as, with a look of sickening horror, he turned to resume his way to Hastingleigh Court.

"May it please me!" he gasped. "How will it affect her!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

AT LAST!—MINE!

It seemed as if Heaven had heard the prayers of the Marchioness of St. Leonards, and refused to let the machinations of the wicked prevail, for even Anne Marchmont was lost in the vessel bearing her to Australia. Having too heavy a deck-load, it went down in the first gale it encountered.

And what else, now that all danger from malignant revenge was removed, than uprightliness, gayety and happiness should reign at Hastingleigh Court? But it did not. Etheline was far from being joyous, and Lollie, although she was plumper and in good health, had not got the rose-bank to her cheek. She had made her peace with her mother, who recanted in very humble terms all her suspicions and unworthy observations respecting Etheline, was now only too grateful for the position in which she had placed her daughter, and had sent off Bob with a bee in his ear.

Lollie had been particular in letting her mother know everything about herself, and even in one of her letters to her had requested her to call at the house of Duncan M'Culloch, Fraser and Co., and inform the junior partner, Mr. Charles Templeton, that she should no longer require any more work from the firm, because she was residing as companion with the young Lady Etheline, daughter of the Marquis of St. Leonards—the same beautiful young lady who, he would remember, as Miss Smith had been Queen of the Work-room.

Artful Lollie! That was the fly which she managed to make her mother cast in the yet troubled waters, and she waited to see the fish she anticipated jump to the bait; but she waited some time.

If talking would have brought Gordon Athol back from the Cape of Good Hope, and Charles Templeton down to Hastingleigh Court, to—well, look at the pictures, the tongues of Etheline and Lollie would have very quickly brought them both there, but it did not. Charles Templeton, who had received her message, was waiting too. His right ear was constantly in a blaze, and he was perpetually repeating to himself, as he touched it with his forefinger, "If you talk well of me, pray go on;" but that was all.

Yet one day it was mentioned by the marchioness to Etheline that a party of very high born and distinguished guests was expected shortly at Hastingleigh Court, and that the first festivities since their happy reunion were to follow. On the following morning Etheline happened to be seated alone in her boudoir, and then came a gentle tap to her door. It was opened immediately, and a gentleman with rather closely-cropped silver hair and a neatly-trimmed white mustache entered, it seemed, with the air of a suppliant.

It was the Duke of Glenlyon. She recognized him in an instant, and rising to her feet, turned as pale as death.

"Lady Etheline," he exclaimed, even obsequiously, "I perceive that you remember me, as how should you not! I have to sue to you for pardon, but, fearing my own powers, I have brought one to plead for me, upon whose prevailing eloquence I place my sole reliance."

He stepped aside as he concluded, and revealed to her the handsome face and manly form of Gordon Athol. He did better—he abruptly retired from the room so that they stood alone together once again, even as they had in the small apartment in London; but how changed their relations were now to each other! It is true that he was still the son of a duke, and loved her as dearly—nay, more fondly than ever; but she—she was now the acknowledged daughter of a marquis as high-born as himself, and much wealthier.

In this supreme moment of exquisite felicity, she remembered what she had been when he came a-wooing, and how he had then honored her. Now, altered as her position was, she knew not what to say or do to prove how much she honored him and loved him.

He stood motionless, flushed, breathless, drinking in her lustrous beauty with his hungered eyes, and he saw her stretch forth her arms, and he heard her rich, intense voice, with its silvery music, quiveringly murmur—

"I was a work-girl, and you would have made me your wife. I refused you; but now—now, Gordon, will you take me as I am, and for what I am?"

With a faint cry, he caught her in his arms and folded her to his heart, ejaculating almost inaudibly, from the depth of his emotion—

"Etheline! Etheline! O my queen!"

She pressed her lips to his forehead—it may have been his lips—and murmured back—

"Mine at last!—mine!—mine! O my king!"

And while this was going on, and much after it, Lollie was conveniently out of the way; but Somebody had accompanied Gordon Athol to Hastingleigh Court, and Somebody had inquired closely and inquisitively after her. He learned that she had gone into the park for a stroll, which was true, and Somebody went out for a stroll into the park too.

Lollie had taken with her a beautiful little Italian greyhound, and she played with it, and chased it in and out and between the tall stems of the fine old trees, until her hair strayed wildly and her cheeks became flushed, and she looked prettier than ever she had in her life. And at the moment of her prettiest she ran into the arms of Somebody. She bounded up astonished, and was more astounded to behold the face of Charles Templeton close to her own, to hear him whisper in her ear—

"It's all right, Lollie; I've squared the governor. You are to be my little wife, and he is bursting with impatience to see you."

Then he kissed her, and she kissed him, and they laughed, and then cried and laughed again, kissed, and had such a passionate embrace.

What more could we say if we were to write another volume?

The reader will, however, like to know that the Marquis and Marchioness of St. Leonards re-entered society, and lived together in loving harmony ever afterward, the marquis seeking to prove to her by all means within his reach that she was—Ever his Queen.

That Etheline and Gordon Athol were united in marriage with splendid festivities—that each day, hour, minute, Gordon worshipped the ground she walked on, and made her to know that she was—Ever his Queen.

That Lollie and Charles Templeton were married with much rejoicing—that he announced her to everybody as the head of his Firm—and Ever his Queen.

And they lived happy ever afterward.

That Mr. Fisell, as he constantly proclaimed to "a fellow an' 'artless world," had "chucked himself away" on Miss Camoy—and they did *not* live happy ever afterward.

That Cleveland Dysart was buried, with his errors and his failings, in the village churchyard of Hastingleigh; that Etheline, who returned to England to attend his funeral obsequies, caused a marble tomb to be placed over his remains.

She had known the history of his secret worship, and, therefore, as the most fitting, and, indeed, the only inscription she permitted to be placed upon it were the words, "EVER MY QUEEN!"

THE END.

PRUDY'S VALENTINE.

BY BELLE BURTON.

The day had been an unusually trying one for Prudy. The very aspect of the world generally was depressing; dull, cold, gray and *February* out of doors, and indoors that noisy, roystering crew of ill-mannered boys and girls. Prudy was not exactly a success as a teacher, but the lessons gave her no trouble; it was the government of these wild backwoods youths and maidens that troubled her. To-day they were unusually rampant, and giggled and "sparked" under her very nose.

"Elizabeth Matilda Perkins"—she gave her the whole name to-day as a sort of relief to her feelings—"of what State is Indianapolis the capital?"

"What'm?"

Prudy repeated her question.

"D'know m," and Elizabeth Matilda Perkins grinned at a long legged youth in butternut trowsers, as if there was an especial merit in not knowing where Indianapolis belonged.

There was a suppressed fury in Prudy's brown eyes.

"May I ask what you *do* know?"

"Yes'm. I know that pap says, that you hain't much of a schoolmarm," the girl said, impudently.

"Take your books and go home. You need not return until I see your father."

The girl banged her books together—not many, for "readin', spellin' and a little figgerin'," was as high as her ambition went, or rather her parents' ambition. Elizabeth Matilda Perkins had none of her own.

So the day went on. When Prudy locked the school-house door that afternoon it was with a feeling of almost intense relief. If the school had burned before her eyes, I believe that she would have enjoyed the spectacle. As it was she wrenched the key from the lock, and dropped it into her pocket in a silent fury that she felt must find a vent before very long.

The boys and girls straggled along the snowy path by twos and threes discussing "the schoolmarm," utterly indifferent as to whether she heard or not.

"Marm says she hain't a going to send us no longer'n soap bilin' time. Me and Araminty hain't nothing to do till then."

"Pap says she's got a good head for figgerin'—and if she would use a big hickory you one might like her better."

And so on. Prudy walked behind quietly without speaking, until the last straggler had got far enough ahead on the wooded path to be out of sight, and then she sat down on the snow by the path and thought. Her thoughts were not philanthropic ones I am afraid, but I am not inclined to blame her, knowing, by a hard-taught experience, what a backwoods school is, in winter. She started up presently, seeing no way out of the trouble; she must get a little brightness into her face before she went home, else father would worry—poor father, who depended upon her for sunshine. A jingle of sleigh-bells made her pull her veil down suddenly over the clouded face, and stand aside as a long, country sleigh, full of merry young folks, dashed past her. Two of the company bowed and smiled as they passed—Phil Meredith, the blonde, broad-chested gentleman most conspicuous in the sleigh, and the bright-eyed fairy next him. He was manager of the great Broadlands farm, and she—Jessie Donald—was the daughter, and only child of its master.

She was nestling very closely to him, but the sleigh was full and the winter wind raw and cold. She, Prudy, could brave the wind and snow, but Jessie was different—dainty Jessie, in her seal-skin jacket and pretty hat. It was fitting that she should have a shoulder to lean upon, though it belonged to Phil Meredith, her old playmate—good-tempered Phil, whom she had played with so often under the old bitter-sweet at the bottom of the garden.

"It is just as well," she said grimly, trudging along, but two tears slid over her cheeks and down upon her shabby muff, and in an instant—I positively *would not* tell this did I not know that many of my fair readers must in candor own to having done such things themselves sometimes *under great provocation*—in an instant the shabby muff was flying through the air, thrown in anger from the little hands it had sheltered so many winter days. Then Prudy laughed—time, you say, for reaction. "Poor thing!" she said, peeping over the high rail-fence where it lay quite harmlessly, "you can't help being shabby, I suppose, and as I shall freeze without you, I must climb the fence after you." She did so, and as she was climbing back, not without difficulty, she saw another sleigh coming, a single one this time.

The color flamed up into her cheek, and she had half a mind to climb back again and cross the field. The snow was a foot deep, but her feet were wet already, and snow was preferable to—this. But it drew nigh—stopped. A fat, red-faced man leaned out of the sleigh and asked her if she would not ride—was she not cold?

She shook her head gayly and answered: "Nein, es ist mir warm," and then the fat face beamed and the guttural voice threw a perfect volley of German at her; but she would not answer, nor seem to understand, even when he called her "mein kind," and was very fatherly indeed. For Prudy knew this man—Herr Wenkel, maker (and drinker) of beer—and knew that he had been to see her father. So she stood well back from the sleigh, not tempted at all now to change the shabby muff for a more elegant one, and smiled as Herr Wenkel looked her over, sure of his prize (for was he not worth two hundred thousand?), but when he said, "Come nearer, I have something to tell you," she sped past him and threw back her adieu over her shoulder. He laughed, and the fat horse waddled on.

At home another trouble waited. They must give up their rooms. A married daughter of the man whose rooms they hired was coming home to live, and the Aldames must find another home as soon as possible. At first they had boarded with Mrs. Price, but Prudy's father, unable to manage his food with the broken-tined forks—they were about as available as Chinese chop-sticks—and unwilling to have his daughter sit at a table where even he was out of place, hired two of the rooms and went to housekeeping. Crippled as he was, confined all day to his couch, his day began when Prudy came home.

"I told Phil what Mrs. Price said, and he said he would look around and come in to-morrow evening."

Prudy bit her lip with vexation.

"You needn't have told *him*, father. I dare say I can find a place."

"But you are only a girl, and you two used to be such friends. He has bought the Hilltop Cottage. We might have a finer house than that, Prudy, if you would—"

"But I will not! Father, I will not! I should hate myself if I allowed myself to be bought with money, and it is nothing less."

"And Phil will marry Jessie Donald, and you—I told him of the report to-day, and he blushed like a girl. It will be fine to be master of Broadlands."

Prudy's lip curled. "Is there nothing worth having but money?" and then she added gently: "If Phil marries Jessie, he will do so because he loves her—not for money or influence. She is above that, father."

"And so are you, it seems," he said, as his daughter put him into his chair and wheeled him to the fire-side. And then Prudy put her arms around his neck and cried. Girls are so queer. It was a lean, weak, shrunken and unsympathizing shoulder to cry upon, but it was the only place she had to cry. Poor Prudy. He patted her on the back soothingly. This looked like giving in at last. "Oh, well," he said, and his voice sounded weaker and more low-spirited than ever. "I married a young wife when I was past fifty—bought her, as you say—and she got along comfortably. She was your mother, Prudy."

Prudy looked up at her mother's portrait that hung upon the wall, a relic of better days. The brown eyes so like Prudy's own met hers with a quiet haunting sorrow that she had never before been able to understand.

"She was very headstrong, Prudy, and, if she had had her way would have married a worthless young fellow, poor as a church mouse. Weakly too, for he died young."

Prudy knew then. Her beautiful young mother who died before she was twenty! Other hands than her father's had caressed those soft brown curls, clustering so thickly about the white temples.

"Poor little mamma!" Prudy said, going softly about her work. But her sorrowful eyes followed her into her dreams, and she woke next morning to "do and dare." And she had to do and dare a great deal that day; though Elizabeth Matilda Perkins did not make her appearance. It was St. Valentine's day, and the tender missives flew from one side of the room to the other thick as hail. She, herself, found one in her desk—a pen and ink sketch of a hand with three fingers and a very stiff thumb holding a scroll with this inscription:

"This hand is yours
If you'll be mine,
Think of me much
As your Valentine."

She smiled as she read it, and laid it aside, wondering a little who had written it, and who she was to think of.

At home that evening she found Phil Meredith. Her father was fast asleep. He rose and came forward to meet her. "I have brought you something for your birthday," he said, directly dropping a little box into her hand. A bracelet with a cluster of bitter-sweet berries in coral and gold.

"Oh, Phil," she said, surprised, "it is my birthday, but I had forgotten."

"It is worth something to hear that," he said, "you have not called me Phil before for two years."

Prudy flushed all over her thin little face. "And you remembered the old bitter-sweet arbor"—and then recollecting herself said, "Sit down; how is Jessie?"

"Prudy, if I knew what fellow had brought that look into your face, I would cane him with pleasure."

"And what if I told you there was no 'fellow' in the case"

"Then I should think that Prudy was not truthful. I have heard—"

"Have you?"

Prudy was busy putting away her hat with her back turned to him.

"That school is part of it, I suppose; but not all. Prudy, confide in me—we have always been friends, have we not?"

There was a tremulous motion of the slender little hand that hung listlessly down at her side. He noticed it and possessed himself of the hand, doubling his big palm over it. "Prudy," drawing her to him, "you remember the old days! I saw it in your face just now—we were to be married when we were grown, Prudy. We were boy and girl then, we are man and woman now, but I love you still, Prudy."

And Prudy stammered out her confession, while Phil drew her to his breast—a safe, sure resting-place.

"How about old Wenkel? he sent you a valentine. I told him I meant to ask you to marry me."

"Oh, Phil! you didn't?"

"I did. He scratched his head a little and then wrote this," handing her a big envelope.

"Why it is a check for a thousand dollars!"

"Well, that's a pretty good valentine."

"Yes, but you are a better one still."

☞ "Madam," said a certain nameless one to Mrs. Brown the other day, "you are talking simple rubbish." "Yes, sir," replied the ever-crushing lady, "because I wish you to comprehend me."

☞ Hooka Jim's skill as a trailer and scout surpasses common experience even in Indian warfare. The command under his lead as guide followed the Modoc trail by night; by some mysterious power he skilfully led them over the rocky ridges as if by intuition. When the trail grew cold he felt with his hands over the rocks and caught it again; and when at dead fault would strike a match, and holding his coat over it would catch the scent again and push ahead. It is really wonderful what perception he possesses to catch a trail.

☞ A rough North Carolinian, going West with his dozen children and two dozen dogs, recently went on board the steamer Highflyer at a Kentucky landing, and his first question was, "How much will you charge, cap'n, to take us to St Louis?" "Will you go on deck or in the cabin?" queried the captain. The Carolinian hesitated a moment, and then, with a sigh over his own self-sacrifice, replied, "Wal, cap'n, I've lived in a cabin all my life, and I s'pose the cabin 'll be good enough for me."

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ Insomnia drove Mrs. Shaw, of Saginaw, Mich., to kill herself. She had not slept for five days.

☞ A recent visitor to one of the islands on the coast of Maine discovered a school of forty scholars, all of whom were grandchildren of one man.

☞ Sister Rinaldi, a nun in the convent of St. Alphonsus Church, Baltimore, died of fright from the fire.

☞ It is a remarkable fact that the moment a woman writes a letter she is frantic to put it in the post-office, although she may have been putting off the writing for six months.

☞ The Philadelphia Ledger thinks it is a most surprising kind of love which finds its final expression in murdering the object of the lover's affection.

☞ An exchange, in commenting on the Washington canine case, asks: "Can a dog bark at pleasure?" We think it can, provided the dog feels well and Pleasure should happen to be within barking distance. But, if we were Mr. Pleasure, we would endeavor to vaccinate the dog with a brick.—*Norristown Herald.*

☞ A Binghamton (N. Y.) paper says that a family named Glazer had just sat down to supper, when one of the women informed them that she had a presentiment that lightning would strike the table, and begged them to leave the room. They had scarcely obeyed when the lightning came in, smashing their supper dishes to atoms. The family will probably be firm believers hereafter in the theory of supernatural forewarnings.

☞ Henry T. Bray got the prize as the handsomest baby in the San Francisco baby show. The other prizes for babies were awarded to the handsomest twins, the one having the heaviest head of hair, the one with the smallest feet and hands, the fattest dark-eyed baby, the fattest blue-eyed baby, the smallest, the best dressed, the sweetest smiling, and the loudest bawler. Then prizes were given to the youngest mother, the oldest mother and the handsomest mother.

☞ A Pennsylvania preacher, while holding service recently, gave thanks in a fervent prayer for the prosperous condition of the crops, "excepting, O Lord, the corn, which is backward, and the oats, which are mighty thin in spots."

☞ The story of the rat that stole a lighted tobacco pipe in a mine, and sat up on his haunches, puffing away, and winking at the owner, when he claimed it, is among the "local news" supplied to the readers of the Grasse Valley (Cal.) Union.

☞ An Englishman in New York city thinks our officials are very impolite, because, when, after asking a business question, and being politely answered, he "ventured a few more interrogations on domestic subjects, such as his mode of living, amount of salary, number of children, and other little harmless topics, he suddenly pulled out his portemonnaie and handed me a little card, which I presumed to be an invitation to join his domestic circle, when to my astonishment I discovered thereon the figure of a corpse, lying in his coffin, with these words inscribed, 'This man was talked to death.' I need not tell you that I vacated the premises immediately."

☞ HYPOTHESIS.—At a late examination of civil-service candidates, a question was put to them as to the meaning of "hypothesis." One candidate answered that it was "a machine for raising water." Another said he didn't remember of ever hearing the word before, but it *sounded* to him "as though it meant the twist which the head of a department puts on his subordinates when he wants them to 'come down' for election expenses."

☞ Two or three Cuban ladies have created a breeze at Saratoga by smoking cigarettes on the balcony of one of the leading hotels. They were quite indifferent to the gaze and audible comments of promenaders.

☞ Everything will be named after the "Shah" next winter, from needles up to goose yokes. Already the "Shah" dressing-gown can be purchased; also, "Shah" buttons, scarfs, cuffs and rosettes.

☞ Mrs. Hartwell, of Columbus, Ohio, has quite lost her faith in dreams. She dreamt recently that her brother was dead, and awoke her husband with her screams, and next day a letter came announcing that her brother was well, and had just been awarded a paving contract.

☞ Travel to Niagara Falls is falling off and no wonder, in view of the fees charged to see them. One clergyman states that it cost twelve dollars for himself and family to enjoy what ought to be as free to everybody as the ocean. Down with this shameless extortion!

☞ The trade dollar is showing its shining face at intervals, like an early star in the evening, soon to be followed by a million more. It is larger than the old dollar, and on the reverse side bears its exact value, $1 30. In a few years it will be the most familiar coin issued by any country, and a general medium of exchange all over the globe. Its conception is a happy one, and its execution is a credit to our American Mint and our American metallurgy.

☞ A LUCKY BOY.—A Vermont boy is in luck. The school-teacher was just going to "baste" him when the lightning struck the house, and in his excitement the teacher forgot all about the intended thrashing. The boy thinks it was clearly providential.

☞ VERY SICILIAN.—A Western editor, who has just crossed the ocean for the first time, writes to his paper that the sensation produced by seasickness is a very sickish sensation.

☞ The Boston papers claim that Harvard would have won the University race if the finishing line across the river had not been drawn diagonally instead of at right angles. A queer blunder in geometry to be made by men fresh from the colleges.

☞ What is the world coming to, when even the babies exhibit such alarming precocity as did a little seven-year-old charmer in Brattleboro, who, the other day, sent her beau a love letter couched in the following apt and possibly familiar words: "They that seek me early shall find me."

☞ An old couple living near Sparland, Illinois, were recently divorced. The husband has since married the hired girl and the ex-wife taken the hired girl's place.

☞ The Boston Globe fears that foreigners sometimes find it difficult to read our newspaper language, even with a tolerably fair knowledge of its intricacies. What, for instance, could they make of the following from a Western paper: "The mayor galooted up the church aisle, swashaying and gyrating like a Chinese Joss with the jim-jams?"

☞ A man who pretends to know, calls courtship "the skirmish before the regular battle begins."

☞ La Crosse left it to a lightning-rod agent how many rods to put on a new school-house, and he hoisted thirteen before they stopped him.

Hard Work.

"What is your secret of success?" asked a lady of Turner, the distinguished painter. He replied, "I have no secret, madam, but hard work."

Says Dr. Arnold, "The difference between one boy and another is not so much in talent as in energy."

"Nothing," says Reynolds, "is denied well-directed labor, and nothing is to be attained without it."

"Excellence in any department," says Johnson, "can now be attained only by the labor of a lifetime; it is not to be purchased at a lesser price."

"There is but one method," said Sydney Smith, "and that is hard labor; and a man who will not pay that price for distinction, had better dedicate himself to the pursuit of the fox."

"Step by step," says the French proverb. "one goes very far."

"Nothing," says Mirabeau, "is impossible to the man who can will. 'Is that necessary?' 'That shall be.' This is the only law of success."

"Have you ever entered a cottage, ever travelled in a coach, ever talked with a peasant in the field, or loitered with a mechanic at the loom," says Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, "and not found that each of those men had a talent you had not, knew something you knew not?"

The most useless creature that ever yawned at a club, or counted the vermin on his rags under the suns of Calabria has no excuse for want of intellect. What men want is not talent, it is purpose; in other words, not the power to achieve, but the will to labor. I am no believer in genius, but I believe that labor, judiciously and continuously applied, becomes genius.

☞ Five German families, all related to each other, and living in one school district in Wisconsin, have seventy-five children among them, all sound and healthy.

☞ The criterion of true beauty is that it increases on examination; if false, it lessens. There is something, therefore, in true beauty that corresponds with right reason, and is not merely the creation of fancy.

☞ True courage is cool and calm. The bravest men have the least of brutal, bullying insolence, and in the very time of danger are found the most serene and free.

☞ Beware of substituting quantity for quality in education.

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OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

[Editors will please bear in mind that the following Observations by Max Adeler, in common with the other original contents of THE POST, are copyrighted. We give this notice on account of the constant "appropriation" of Max Adeler's articles, without the requisite credit being given either to the writer or the paper.—*Ed. Sat. Eve. Post.*]

—We always think of great men as in the act of performing the deeds which give them renown, or else in stately attitudes of repose, grand, gloomy and majestic. And yet this is hardly fair, because even the most gorgeous and magnificent of human beings have to bother themselves with the little things of life which engage the attention of us smaller people. No doubt Moses snuffled and got angry when he had a severe cold in his head, and if a fly bit his leg while he was sitting in the desert—why should we suppose he did not jump and use violent language and rub the sore place? And Cæsar, isn't it tolerably certain that he used to become furious when he went up-stairs to get his slippers in the dark and found that Calphurnia had shoved them back under the bed so that he had to sweep around wildly for them with the broom-handle? And when Solomon cracked his crazy bone, is it unreasonable to suppose that he hopped around the room and looked mad and felt as if he wanted to cry? Imagine George Washington sitting on the edge of the bed putting on a clean shirt, and growling at Martha because the buttons were off; or St. Augustine with an apron around his neck having his hair cut; or Joan of Arc holding her front hair in her mouth, as women do, while she fixed up her back hair; or Napoleon jumping out of bed in a frenzy to chase a mosquito around the room with a pillow; or Martin Luther in his night-shirt trying to put the baby to sleep at two o'clock in the morning; or Alexander the Great, with the hiccups; or Thomas Jefferson getting suddenly over a fence to avoid a dog; or the Duke of Wellington lying in bed with the mumps; or Daniel Webster abusing his wife because she hadn't tucked the covers in at the foot of the bed; or Benjamin Franklin paring his corn with a razor; or Jonathan Edwards at the dinner-table, wanting to sneeze just as he gets his mouth full of hot beef; or Noah standing at his window at night throwing bricks at a cat.

—We observe in the papers an item to the effect that a mother in Maryland bit off her child's toe in her sleep. We have so often remonstrated with mothers against the practice of sleeping with their children's toes in their mouths, that we have little sympathy for this woman. Sooner or later the catastrophe is sure to come. No woman should ever sleep with her babe's toe in her mouth, unless she has false teeth which can be removed, or the toe can be wrapped up in sheet-iron.

—Bottlebury, of Camden, will never dive into the creek to save another woman from drowning. He saw a red-haired girl named Sparks tumble in the other day, off of a boat, and he instantly plunged in after her, caught her by her dress and swam to the shore with her. As soon as they were on the dry land Miss Sparks gave a hysterical scream, flung her arms about Bottlebury's neck and fainted. Just then the father came up with the rest of the family, and perceiving the situation, he dashed up to Bottlebury, grasped his hand and said—"Take her, my boy; take her! It is hard to give her up. It wrenches her old father's heart; but she is yours! Bless you my children, bless you!" Then Mrs. Sparks cried, and said she hoped Harriet would be happy. The little Sparks manifested their emotion by climbing up Bottlebury's legs and pulling his coat-tail, while Harriet came to, and laying her head on Bottlebury's shoulder, whispered, "Kiss me, darling." Bottlebury, amazed and indignant, tore himself away and fled. He was arrested that afternoon on a charge of breach of promise. And on the trial, the jury gave the broken-hearted Miss Sparks two hundred dollars damages. Bottlebury has intimated to his confidential friends, that if any other warm-haired woman intends to fall overboard near him, she will find it to her advantage to learn to swim first.

—Wilson had a theory that there was nothing in the idea that a bull would become enraged at the sight of a red rag, but he firmly believed that the wildest kind of animals could be frightened by opening an umbrella in their faces. He determined to prove the truth of this doctrine when he was at Darby the other day, and selecting a red-flannel shirt and an umbrella he climbed over into a field and advanced waving the shirt at the bull. Since then Wilson has said that he had no idea a bull could run at the rate of a mile a minute, but anyhow this one did not consume much time in approaching Wilson, and he consequently dropped the shirt and tried to raise his umbrella. Somehow the catch wouldn't work, and as the bull was not aware of the necessity for delay, it became uncommonly sociable on the spot and the next moment Mr. Wilson was performing a fantasy on two horns, at the end of which he lit on the other side of the fence firmly convinced that an earthquake or some other extraordinary natural convulsion had just occurred. He is a convert now; and he carries a gun in place of an umbrella when he goes out to skirmish with bulls.

—When Morphy first bought his farm in Lancaster county he was not aware that all the water on the premises was strongly impregnated with iron. But when he drank that chalybeate water for five or six months his system was so thoroughly charged with iron that when he would wake up in the morning he would find that the bedstead had gradually shifted around during the night until the head pointed north. And the children's beds all performed the same manœuvre. Without taking warning by this occurrence, the family continued to drink the water until one fatal evening, Mrs. Murphy had been house-cleaning, and that night she and Murphy and the children lay down in the same room. No sooner were they in a horizontal position than all their heads swung around suddenly to the northern end of the chamber where the stove stood, and the next instant the whole five of them were drawn violently against the hot stove and held there by magnetic attraction. Murphy suffered worst because he was bald, but Mrs. Murphy and the children lost every hair on their heads, and when the family sold out and moved away, every member of it was balder than all the other Murphys that ever wore a scalp.

—We went out to Slaymaker's in June to spend the summer, but we have been obliged to leave. Slaymaker had a small stream near his house, from which he used to pump water into the tank in his garret. It occurred to him some time ago that it would be a good idea to put up a windmill which could do the pumping for him, so he built one at a cost of two hundred dollars. The first day it began to revolve it frightened Slaymaker's best horse, so that it ran against the fence and was killed, and the arms were so long that they nearly brained Slaymaker's oldest boy, who was standing beneath watching the machine, when it suddenly stopped work, and refused to move an inch. Slaymaker accordingly pumped the tank full, and just as he stopped the mill began to pump like fury. Slaymaker, in alarm, procured a rope and tied one of the wings to a tree. When the tank was empty he tried to make the windmill fill it again, but the concern was immovable. Then Slaymaker waited for a couple of weeks, and carried the water up to the house in buckets, because he was afraid to fill the tank, when the mill might get to work at any moment. Finally, as there seemed to be no hope of the machinery getting all right again, he did pump the tank full, and then went to bed. That night there was the first hurricane ever known in that neighborhood. The windmill made about four hundred revolutions a minute, and left the bed of the stream below it completely dry, while it poured nearly six hundred gallons an hour into Slaymaker's garret. The boarders all swam out the windows, and spent the rest of the night in the barn, while Slaymaker took to a tree, from which, at daylight, he had a magnificent view of the falls as they poured picturesquely from the attic windows, every minute or two bringing out with them a chair or a hair trunk, or one of Slaymaker's shirts or a washstand. Mrs. Slaymaker will not clean house this summer, but Slaymaker has a windmill that he is anxious to sell. He will probably close it out cheap to a purchaser who wants to take it away right off.

—It is an odd fact that no baby ever did, and no baby ever will, behave well in company. The mother always brings it into the parlor where the visitor is, dressed in its clean dress, and its father and its aunt come in smiling at the same time. After the visitor has kissed the baby and taken it on her lap, and declared it is the dearest little thing she ever saw, the baby's mother and she begin to talk. Each talks about her own baby as fast as she can rattle, and both talk at once, apparently without caring what the other is saying. In the midst of the conversation the baby "throws up" on the visitor's dress, and is suddenly handed to its mother. The visitor smiles a sickly smile, and says it makes no difference, but she is mad. The conversation is resumed, but presently the father winks furiously at the mother and frowns, and clears his throat and makes mysterious signals at the side of the chair with his hand. The mother looks down and perceives that some of the baby's under garments are slipping off, and she snatches up that infant and flies from the room. When she returns the child cries to go to its father; and no sooner is it settled on his knee than it betrays an irresistible yearning to go to its aunt, after which it cries furiously because its mother won't take it. Then the aunt gets a piece of candy to quiet it, and when its hands have acquired sufficient stickiness, it reaches over and mauls the visitor's bonnet. Then its mother tries to show off its accomplishments; but it utterly refuses to make a display; it is as stupid as an owl. It won't say "mamma" or "papa," and it won't show how big it is. Its father tries to coax it to say "papa," but it pays no attention to him. He tries again and again, getting madder all the time, and dreadfully afraid the visitor will think the child is dull. At last he grabs the child by the arm and shakes it and yells "why don't you say papa as I tell you?" Then the child screams like a backyard full of cats. The more the mother soothes it, the louder it gets, until at last the father exclaims "gimme that brat," and picks it up and dashes out of the room and is heard spanking it in the entry. Then the visitor goes home looking at her dress and deciding that the end of that infant will be the gallows, if its characteristics are allowed to develop fully as it grows up.

—The following verses have been submitted to us for consideration, and we have determined to publish them, with the distinct understanding, that if the author sends any more he will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, for barbarity. The poem is entitled

MY DYING FRIEND.

I knowed his breath was falling fast,
I knowed he'd soon be gone.
I never had no hope for him,
For he couldn't last very long.

He raised his dying head and smiled
And whispered unto me—
"I never done no harm as I know."
Then out his soul did flee.

We do not object to the sentiments expressed by the poem. A man may approve of them and still lead a virtuous and happy life and enjoy his regular meals. But the construction is faulty. The poet is hardly fit to write poetry in such a critical and exacting world as this. He will probably be happier if he follows his friend into the other world—for there is perhaps no nominative case upon the evergreen shore, no past and present tense, no rules of gender or subjunctive moods, no adverbs and rhymes in the dim hereafter. Death is the poet's best refuge. The undertaker will not grieve because he can't parse, and the sexton will not care whether he makes "gone" rhyme with "long," or "meteorological" with "measles."

Gayety.

There are two kinds of gayety; the one rises from want of heart, being touched by no pity, sympathizing with no pain, even of its own causing; it shines and glitters like a frost-bound river in the gleaming sun. The other springs from excess of heart—that is, a heart overflowing with kindliness toward all men and all things, and suffering under no superadded grief; it is light from the happiness which it causes, from the happiness which it sees. This may be compared to the placid river, sparkling and smiling under the sun of summer, and running on to give fertility and increase to all within, and even to many beyond, its reach.

☞ "For many years," says Carlyle, "it has been one of my constant regrets that no schoolmaster of mine had a knowledge of natural history, so far at least as to have taught me the grasses that grow by the wayside, and the little winged and wingless neighbors that are continually meeting me with a salutation which I cannot answer as things are."

☞ Idleness and luxury produce premature decay much faster than many trades that are regarded as the most fatal to longevity. Labor in general, instead of shortening the term of life, increases it. It is the lack of occupation that destroys so many of the wealthy.

☞ Never put much confidence in those who put no confidence in others. A man prone to suspect evil, is mostly looking in his neighbor for what he sees in himself. As to the pure all things are pure, even so to the impure all things are impure.

☞ Of all the actions of a man's life his marriage does least concern other people; yet of all actions of our life it is most meddled with by other people.

AN EXTINGUISHER.

FORWARD AND LOQUACIOUS YOUTH—"By Jove, you know, upon my word, now—if I were to see a ghost, you know, I should be a chattering idiot for the rest of my life!"
INGENUOUS MAIDEN (dreamily)—"*Have* you seen a ghost?"

ONE SUMMER NIGHT.

BY T. J. CHAMBERS.

"Sit here, Rafe—here, where the last sunbeams fall so brightly."

Clare Devereux's childish, tender, bird-like voice had never sounded half so sweet to Rafe Raille as at that moment. His pale cheeks glowed with a color that was not reflected from the crimson sunset, and his strange, melancholy eyes grew bright and eloquent as he bent them upon his companion's beautiful face. He sat down beside her upon the beach, and for a moment neither spoke a word. The girl looked away across the rippling ocean, with a longing expression in her large gray eyes.

"Oh, Rafe," she said, "how I wish I had the wings of a bird, that I might fly away to some beautiful isle where summer smiles forever!"

"Ah, yes—would that we might fly together to some lovely solitude, far away from the heartless world and all its follies!" exclaimed the young man, almost passionately.

"Why, Rafe," said the girl with a little laugh, "you seem to be in earnest."

"God knows I am in earnest," replied Rafe Raille, his voice trembling with emotion. "Clare Devereux, the dreariest desert on earth would be Heaven to me if you were there."

"How wildly the boy talks," murmured Miss Devereux, laughing softly.

Rafe Raille caught both the girl's soft hands in his, and his dark, mournful eyes looked straight into hers. Miss Devereux turned away her eyes, and a bright crimson mounted to her cheeks.

"Oh, Clare, my beautiful, my love, my life, do not trifle with me!" exclaimed the young man, passionately. "You know how I love you—how I worship you—and yet you laugh at my vows, and flirt with every handsome gentleman who comes in your way, although you know that you torture me almost unto death. Oh, Clare, Clare, if you could feel for one hour the fiery passion that burns within my bosom, you would be merciful—you would spare me!"

"You are foolish, Rafe," said Miss Devereux, almost coldly. "What am I, that you should love me so much—that you should render unto me that worship which is due only to your God?"

"You are only a woman, Clare—an erring mortal like myself—but, ah, Heaven! I love you more than all the world—more than life—more than my God! Can it be possible that such love as mine shall meet no response—be met only by indifference? Ah, no, no! you do love me, Clare, my beautiful—you must love me, or I shall die!"

"Love never kills," said Miss Devereux.

"No, but a life without love—without *your* love, my sweet—would be unendurable to me. Say, then, that you will try to love me—give me a little hope!" pleaded the young man eagerly.

"I do not love you, Rafe, except as a friend—I can never marry you."

"Ah, do not say that, Clare!" cried Rafe Raille in an agonized voice. "Do not drive me mad by depriving me entirely of hope! I do not ask you to marry me now, for I am a poor man—but I will win a fortune for your sake. Already I am beginning to rise in my profession—let me hope that I may some day win your hand, and I will labor with renewed energy—I will make a name of which you shall be proud."

"But I do not love you, Rafe," said the girl, softly.

An expression of intense agony darkened the young man's melancholy, beautiful face.

"Ah, Heaven!" he moaned, "my curse is heavier than I can bear. Why cannot you love me, Clare Devereux? I am not repulsive in appearance, and—I say it without vanity—I have talents superior to the majority of men. Why need you dislike me?"

"Dislike you, Rafe? I like you very much—as a friend."

"Do not speak of friendship between us," said the young man, bitterly. "Friends you and I can never be."

"Good-bye, then," said the girl, rising and holding out her hand.

"Good-bye, Clare? What do you mean?" asked Rafe Raille, rising also.

"Simply that we must part, since you reject my friendship," replied Miss Devereux, coolly. "I have esteemed you highly, but I find you passionate and unreasonable, and I do not care to continue the acquaintance."

The young man's face blanched to the hue of death, and he staggered as if with weakness.

"Stay—for God's sake do not leave me thus!" he said, as Miss Devereux turned away. The agony in his voice would have touched a heart of stone.

"What do you wish?" asked Miss Devereux gently, turning so that the light of the setting sun fell full upon her glorious face. Rafe Raille drew his breath hard, and pressed one hand unconsciously to his heart.

"Forgive my harsh words—my presumption," he said humbly and brokenly. "Let us still be friends, and I will try to be satisfied. I ought to go away—to shake off this spell which enthralls me—but I cannot. My life is bound up in you, Clare—I cannot live away from you. So long as your heart and hand are free, I will try to be content—but I could not endure to see you the wife of another."

"I forgive you, Rafe, and we will still be friends," said Miss Devereux. "Now let us go back to the hotel—I must dress for the ball, which you know comes off there to-night."

"Wait a little—there is time enough for that yet. See, what a gorgeous sunset!" said the young man. "One can almost fancy that he is looking through the golden gates into the beautiful heavenly world."

The west was all aflame. The sun was sinking behind dark clouds, which for the moment seemed transformed into masses of brilliant gold. Bright streaks of crimson shot upward, and the whole sky was flushed with a rosy tinge. Away to the south dark billows of clouds were piled against each other, and an occasional rumble of thunder gave warning of a tempestuous night, although the evening was so calm and beautiful.

For a few moments longer the young people lingered on the beach, watching the enchanting scene; but at length Miss Devereux said, a little impatiently—

"I must go, Rafe, I shall be too late to dress for the ball."

"Very well, we will go," answered Raille, calmly; and turning, they walked across the beach toward the hotel.

Clare Devereux was a beauty and an heiress. She was spending a month at the sea-shore under the protection of a married sister, and she soon became the acknowledged belle of the place. She was as clever as she was beautiful, and, alas! that it should be so, as heartless as she was clever. Petted, courted and flattered by all, she became that detestable thing, a coquette. With talents and accomplishments fitting her for the highest pleasures and duties of life, she spent her time in endeavoring to attract the admiration of the opposite sex, and in ensnaring the hearts of honorable men by her bewitching smiles and honeyed words.

During the previous winter, she had met Rafe Raille in New York; and attracted by the young man's beauty and reputed cleverness, she had got up a flirtation with him, which, as we have seen, became a matter of deadly earnest with the susceptible youth. Rafe Raille was about twenty-three years of age, of good family, but poor. He was becoming well-known, however, as an author, and he made enough by his pen to support him in the careless, Bohemian fashion in which he chose to live. Of ardent and romantic temperament, he grew to love the beautiful Miss Devereux with a passion that amounted almost to madness; and Miss Devereux, pleased with the devotion of the talented young author, did not discourage his attentions. He had never told his love in words until that evening on the beach; but his actions, his sighs and glances had long been plain enough, and Miss Devereux knew perfectly well, even before this passionate declaration, that she held the young man's heart, almost his life, in her hands.

The walk from the sea-shore to the hotel was a silent one. Rafe Raille was absorbed in gloomy thought, and Miss Devereux, seeing that her companion was in no mood for idle conversation, was silent also.

Reaching the hotel, the girl hurried to her room to prepare for the hop, while Raille, avoiding the groups of gayly-dressed, empty-headed young men, sought a retired nook, where he could be alone with his misery.

At length the dancing commenced. The wild, sweet music of the band floated out upon the warm air of the sultry summer night. Beautiful women and noble men glided through the mazes of the dance, keeping time to the enchanting melody.

Pale and dejected, Rafe Raille entered the ball-room with a listless step, and leaning against the wall, he watched the dancers with a glance half-sorrowful, half-cynical. He saw Clare Devereux's graceful, white-robed figure floating through the dance—ah, there was no mistaking *her*, for she was by far the most beautiful woman there, and by her side, with his arm around her waist, his bold, bad eyes looking down into her lovely upturned face, was Harry Newman, the New York banker and millionaire. Raille's slender frame shook with emotion, as he saw the woman he loved better than life, smiling fondly into the face of another, and that other a man who was as wicked as he was wealthy.

The dance came to an end, and presently Miss Devereux glided to Rafe Raille's side.

"Why do you look so gloomy, Sir Poet?" she said, with one of her most bewildering smiles. "Is the fire of genius burning within you?"

"The fire of love—a fire which cannot be quenched while life lasts," answered the young man.

"Fie, Rafe! melodramatic again?" laughed the girl. "Come and have a dance—that will cheer you up. Listen! is not that waltz divine?"

"Where is your devoted cavalier, the handsome millionaire?" asked Raille.

"Who—Harry Newman? Yonder, paying court to that pretty Miss Dalton. Why, Rafe, do you think I care for him?" Miss Devereux's voice was low and caressing. Rafe Raille's heart throbbed fast.

"And you do care for me, Clare—you do, in spite of your cruelty!" he whispered eagerly.

"Care for you—of course I do, I never denied it. Now come and dance."

"With you?" The young man's face grew suddenly radiant.

"Certainly—you are the best dancer in the room."

They took their places upon the floor, and a moment later were floating down the room to the wild, sweet waltz music. Raille was the best dancer in the room, when he cared to try, and that night he appeared at his best. His high-bred, intellectual face was flushed with happiness, and his slender figure was erect and graceful. People watched them admiringly; murmurs of "what a splendid couple!" ran around the room. Miss Devereux was very proud of her handsome lover, and she resolved to let him remain her devoted slave.

An hour or two later, Raille wandered out upon the vine-covered balcony. The night was clear, except in the south, where the dark wall of clouds still rested. A full moon shed its silvery light over sea and shore; a gentle breeze blew from the south, rendering the air delightfully cool.

As the young author stood leaning against the railings, gazing out over the moonlit sea, he heard voices at the other end of the balcony, and between the rise and fall of the music inside, he caught fragments of a conversation that seemed to turn his warm blood to ice.

"You love me, Clare?—you will be my wife?" said a deep bass voice—the voice of Harry Newman, the millionaire.

"I love you, Harry—I will be your wife," answered Clare Devereux's sweet, caressing, bird-like voice.

"But that young author, Raille, I think his name is, seems very devoted to you. I am almost inclined to be jealous of him, my sweet."

A little, musical laugh rippled from the girl's lips.

"How foolish!" she murmured. "The boy loves me, I know, and I am sometimes kind to him, for his woe-begone face looks so pitiful—but as to caring for him—why, I love *you*, Harry, my king!"

Rafe Raille drew back in the shadow of the vines, and leaned, half-fainting, against the railings. How long he remained thus he knew not. He was aroused by the hum of voices near him on the balcony; some one was proposing a walk down to the beach.

"By all means," said Miss Devereux's voice. "This moonlight is glorious, and I am tired to death of dancing."

In a moment Rafe Raille was at Miss Devereux's side.

"Will you walk with me, Clare—for the last time?" he murmured, huskily.

Miss Devereux assented. It was no part of her policy to lose any of her lovers.

Miss Devereux and the young author walked foremost. Several other couples followed, flirting desperately all the way. What fitter opportunity for love-making could be had than a moonlight walk by the sea?

The night was beautiful in the extreme. The glittering, shell-strewn beach; the deep-blue sky, studded with sparkling stars; the masses of dark clouds in the distance, where a lurid blaze of lightning was seen at intervals; and the vast ocean, lying calm and smiling beneath the silver moon, made up an enchanting picture.

"How delightful it would be to row over the sparkling waves," said Miss Devereux, as she stood at the water's edge.

"We can easily do so," answered her companion. "Here is a boat moored at our feet, and I am an excellent oarsman. Shall we get in?"

"Of course," answered the girl. "It will seem like a trip to fairy-land."

In a moment they were seated in the boat, and grasping the oars Rafe sent the frail bark swiftly across the water. For a long distance he rowed with almost savage energy, and in utter silence. At last he flung down the oars and turned his white face toward his beautiful companion.

"We are alone together, Clare, for the last time," he said, with a mournful smile.

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Devereux, alarmed by his curious manner.

"I mean that we must part, Clare Devereux, forever. I have been a fool, but I will be your slave, your plaything, your dupe, no longer. My face looks so sorrowful, forsooth, that you take pity on me and treat me kindly! Oh, Clare, Clare, I have given you the best and only love of a true heart, and in return you ridicule me before your more favored lovers!"

"You were listening—you overheard—" began Miss Devereux.

"Yes, I was listening, but not intentionally—I overheard your interview with Harry Newman—I heard you promise to become his wife."

"Well, is it any affair of yours?" said Miss Devereux, angrily.

"No, Clare, it is no affair of mine—but oh, my love, why have you been so cruel? If you could not love me, why did you try to deceive me—why did you lead me on by smiles and glances until my love for you became a consuming passion? Oh, Clare, it is cruel to win men's hearts only to trample them under your feet."

"The fault was yours alone," said Miss Devereux, resting her eyes upon the water, through which she trailed her white fingers. "I treated you only as a friend—you should have guarded your heart better."

"Ah, yes—had I been heartless like yourself, I should have passed through the fire of your smiles unscathed. But I was young, Clare, and ignorant of the ways of the world—I was so foolish as to think that the deep, all-absorbing passion of my soul would be returned. Now I know how blind I was. You *have* no heart, Clare—you are as beautiful and as cold as a statue of marble."

Touched by the pathos in the young man's voice, Clare Devereux bowed her face upon her hands. For the first time in her life she reproached herself for what she had done.

Rafe Raille bowed his head also, leaving the boat to float where it would. For several moments they sat thus, lost in bitter reflection. At length a loud roaring sound, as of wind, caused the girl to raise her head.

"Oh, Rafe, Rafe!" she cried, wildly, "the storm! the storm!"

Rafe aroused himself from the stupor of despair into which he had fallen, and gazed up at the heavens. Yes, a storm was upon them. The black masses of clouds were driving rapidly from the south, and the roar of the wind grew louder every moment. A strange, sweet smile crossed the young man's face.

"We can never reach the shore alive," he said calmly. "Oh, Clare, my darling, my sweet, you would not be mine in life, but you shall be mine in death!"

As he spoke, he threw his arms around the girl's trembling form, and pressed a warm kiss upon her lips.

"Oh, Rafe, save me, save me!" cried Miss Devereux. "Save me, and I will still be yours—for I love you, Rafe, I love you!"

"This is no time for trifling—remember we stand upon the threshold of death," said Rafe, solemnly.

"I am not trifling—I know now, when it is too late, that I love you as I have never loved any one else."

"My darling!" murmured Rafe, rapturously. "Then in death or in life you are mine!"

He grasped the oars, and plied them with superhuman strength, but it was too late. The storm burst furiously over them. The wind blew a hurricane, the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed, and the little boat was tossed helplessly upon the angry waves.

On shore, a group of men stood on the wet sands, peering anxiously through the storm and darkness for a glimpse of the boat that was never to come in. The ladies walking on the beach had fled back to the hotel at the approach of the storm, and communicated the fearful intelligence that Miss Devereux and Mr. Raille were out at sea in a frail egg-shell of a boat. The music and dancing ceased abruptly, and the greater part of the gentlemen rushed down to the beach, in the vain hope of rendering some assistance to the poor young couple who were already beyond the reach of human aid.

The storm was short as it was terrible. The rain ceased, the clouds parted, and the moon shone forth, but the waves still rolled almost mountains high, and dashed themselves into foam upon the beach.

"Poor young couple!" said one gentleman, sadly. "They are lost, without doubt."

"See here!" suddenly exclaimed another, pointing to a dark mass that was just washed ashore.

The men seized the bodies—for such they were—and carried them beyond the reach of the waves. Their arms were locked around each other in a close embrace, and a smile was upon Rafe Raille's pallid face.

"Are they dead?" asked one of the men, in a hushed voice.

"Quite dead," answered another, who was a physician. "Poor things!" he added, pityingly, "so young and so beautiful! I think they were lovers. Well, well, perhaps it is best thus—life's trials are over for them—they have not lived to find the sweetness of love die out into coldness and neglect."

Was it best thus? Who shall say? Life at the longest is but short, and death is the king of terrors—but Rafe Raille's upturned, smiling face showed plainly that death had held no terrors for him. Let us hope that in that mysterious world to which we are all hastening, the souls of these two, purified from all earthly dross, walk together in the freshness of eternal youth.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

WE cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

MARY, (Indianapolis, Ind.,) writes: "There is a question I wish to ask you, and will you please answer in correspondents' column? I recently saw this notice, 'The Boston Public Library has just come into possession of a portion of the Barton collection of books, among which are 2,000 volumes of Shakespeare and works relating to him.' Now, what I wish to know is, why are those books called the Barton collection, and by whom donated?" They formed the private library of Thomas P. Barton, of New York, who recently died. He was possessed of a rich and rare library, containing about 5,000 historical works, 6,000 works in lighter literature, an extensive collection in law, theology, art and science, and an exhaustive dramatic collection, comprising over 2,000 works relating to Shakespeare. The library was sold after his death, and purchased by the Boston Public Library for $54,000.

A. E., (Holmesburg, Pa.,) asks: Where can I find a book containing the 'Miller's Dream: My dream, a dream, a summer sun sublimely rose in all its glory bright, &c.?" We are not familiar with the quotation. Perhaps some of our readers may be able to tell us where it may be found. If so we shall be glad to hear from them.

INQUIRER, (Perry, Kan.,) says: "I have been a subscriber to your valuable paper for two years and have not troubled you with any questions yet. I now wish to ask the following and hope you will answer them: 1st. Is it definitely known where Booth, the assassin of Lincoln, was buried? 2d. Where is the Dry Tortugas? 3d. What are to be the main features of the Centennial Exhibition?" 1st. The authorities wished to avoid all publicity in regard to the burial of Booth, and for this reason the place and time of his burial were kept secret. We have seen it stated that he was interred in the yard of the prison at Washington, but we know nothing positively about it. 2d. They are a group of small islands, ten in all, situated about 120 miles southwest of Florida. 3d. It is intended to be a general exhibition of the products of this country, of every description, and of other countries also. There will be connected with it displays of works of art, botanical collections, and every feature, in short, that will add to its attractiveness.

A. W. (Wellsboro, Pa.,) writes: 1st. "Will you please tell me what is a kaleidoscope? How are they made, and could I make one if I had the material? And why is the word not to be found in Webster's Unabridged? 2d. What would be the expense of a trip to Niagara and back for two persons, living four hundred miles from there by rail, including all necessary expenses for staying a week?" 1st. It is an optical instrument whose properties depend on continuous reflection between the surfaces of two mirrors, inclined to each other at an angle nearly of sixty degrees, though any angle obtained by dividing thirty-six degrees by 3, 4, 5, 6, etc., will answer. It is made by taking a round case, of say two inches diameter, and five or six long. In this are inserted two rectangular mirrors approximated at one extremity, so as to leave a narrow slip between them. This end of the case is covered with some opaque substance, with a small hole to look through. At the other end are two round pieces of glass, having loosely between them fragments of colored glass, beads, lace, feathers, etc. The outer piece had better be of ground glass. On looking through the aperture these substances are seen continuously reflected by the mirrors, so as to form beautiful geometrical figures. These figures change with every change in their positions. The word is in Webster. It is your mode of spelling it which is in fault. 2d. That depends in great measure on the railroad fare. There are low excursion rates between Philadelphia and Niagara, $17.50 for the round trip, we think. A person taking an excursion ticket from this city might spend a week there and return at a cost of $20, or two for $[illegible].

R. L. M., (Alexandria, Ind.,) asks: "1st. Is the sun nearer in winter than in summer to the earth, or farther away? 2d. Is the sun nearer the earth as it sets than at noon, or is it the same distance all the time? 3d. Does the earth go round the sun once a year? 4th. What is meant by the delta of a river? 5th. What is meant by O. K.? 6th. Is the story 'Ever my Queen,' published in book form? 7th. Who is King of Sweden and Norway?" 1st. It is nearer during the winter season in the northern hemisphere. 2d. The same distance all the time. 3d. Yes. 4th. In many cases rivers branch near their mouths, their waters reaching the sea through a number of channels. These channels form a triangle, something of the shape of the Greek letter *delta*, whence the name. 5th. It means "all correct." The expression originated in an eccentric spelling of this phrase by some phonetic genius: viz. Oll Korrect. 6th. It is not. 7th. Oscar II. He ascended the throne on May 18th of this year.

PRESUMPTION. You are right, we do not like much to answer personal questions as to our writers. They might not like it. Your writing is quite good.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]